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OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
DEFECTS
OF THE
POOR LAWS,
AND ON THE
CAUSES and CONSEQUENCES
OF THE GREAT
Increaſe and Burden of the Poor.
WITH A
Propoſal for redreſſing theſe Grievances.
IN A
Letter to a MEMBER of PARLIAMENT.

Nemo hec ita interpretetur, tanquam reducam libertatem, & frenis arctioribus reprimam. Illa vero in quantum libet, exeat; ſed eat, non erret. Sene. De Benef. l. 1.

Hoc habeo quodcunque dedi. Fragm. Rabir. Poet. apud eundem. De Benef. l. 6.

Let every Man do according as He is diſpoſed in his Heart: Not grudgingly, or of Neceſſity; *for God loveth a chearful Giver.* 2 Corinth. ix. 7.

By THOMAS ALCOCK, *A. M.*

LONDON,
Printed for R. BALDWIN, jun. at the Roſe in Pater-noſter Row, and R. CLEMENTS in *Oxford*. 1752.

BRITISH MUSEUM

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

Defects of the Poor Law, &c.

SIR,

YOU may remember, that, when I was at your Houſe the Beginning of laſt Summer, I mentioned ſome Part of a Converſation that had paſſed ſome Time before at an Ordinary in *B—g—m*. The Maintenance of the Poor was the Subject of that Converſation. A worthy *Scotch* Member of Parliament, who was one of the Company, declared ſtrongly againſt our preſent Method in *England* of relieving the Neceſſitous, and ſaid, the Poor-Law was a Reflection upon the *Engliſh* Nation. He obſerved, that they had never any ſuch Law in *Scotland*, and yet their Poor, he was convinced, were as well, or better taken Care of; (he might have added) although their Country was comparatively barren, and their Nation poor. This Gentleman further took Notice, that many of the Houſe of Commons were of the ſame Sentiments with himſelf, as to

the Impropriety of that Law, and thought it would be right to have it repealed, if it were not, that it might carry an unpopular Appearance, and perhaps endanger an Inſurrection. Moſt of the Company agreed with him, as to the Imperfection and Impropriety of the Law, but not as to the Expediency of now repealing it.

You and I then entered into a Converſation on the ſame Subject, when you took Occaſion to obſerve to me, how exceeding high the Poor-Rates ran in your Pariſh; that you knew Pariſhes however, in ſeveral different Counties, where they were ſtill conſiderably higher, (particularly in *Oxford*, and ſome Parts of *Eſſex*, &c.) amounting ſome Years, I think, to five and ſix Shillings in the Pound. I alſo took Notice, that in *Cambridge*, whither I had made a Tour the Summer before, ſeveral Gentlemen were complaining of their exceſſive burthenſome Poor-Rates; in ſome Priſhes, if I remember right, exceeding even thoſe which you had inſtanced; and further added, that they were drove to a Neceſſity of thinking of ſome new Scheme, and endeavouring at ſome better Methods of Management, by erecting a Poor-Houſe or otherwiſe, in order, if poſſible, to ſave Charges, and in ſome Meaſure eaſe themſelves of ſuch an intollerable Load of Expences. Our Diſcourſe on this Topic ended with your wiſhing (what every wiſe and good Man muſt wiſh) that the Sources of this great Grievance were properly enquired

enquired into and repreſented to the Public; and that ſome effectual Remedy (which ſuch an Enquiry might probably ſuggeſt) could be found out for ſo great and growing an Evil.

From theſe, and other Obſervations I had made and met with in ſome other Counties, where I was more particularly acquainted, I thought there was but too much Reaſon for the Complaint—That the Buſineſs of the Poor was not rightly managed—That with all the Expences complained of, they were but badly provided for—And, that all Endeavours ſhould be uſed to put their Maintenance upon a better Footing. And though what I have here drawn up, was done in a very haſty and imperfect Manner, yet ſuch as it is, I hope, may be of ſome Uſe, as the Subject is ſeaſonable and intereſting, and has not, that I know of, been handled before in this Way.

The Manner of providing for the Poor in *England* is ſo wrong, and hath been productive of ſo many Evils, and may be of ſtill more, that ſeveral wiſe and good Men have long complained of it, and thought ſome Alteration, if not a total Abolition, neceſſary. The whole Nation, indeed, is now become ſo ſenſible of this growing Evil, that our Repreſentatives in Parliament have taken the Matter into Conſideration, and no doubt in a future Seſſion will endeavour, either to reform the Errors and Abuſes in the preſent Method, or contrive and eſtabliſh ſome new and better Meaſures. With a Deſign to forward

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this good End, ſeveral Treatiſes have of late been publiſhed, and ſome new Schemes and Regulations propoſed for the better Proviſion and Management of the Poor: And every Attempt this Way ought to be kindly received and encouraged, as it is a Point of ſo much Conſequence to the Publick, as the Parliament has as yet come to no Determination thereupon, and may be ſuppoſed willing to liſten to any uſeful Hints, from whatever Quarter they may be offered, for enabling them to form a more perfect Plan. The Difficulty of forming any effectual Plan for the Proviſion and Employment of the Poor, ſufficiently appears from the many ineffectual Ones already made for that Purpoſe: For after all the Poor Laws paſſed, no leſs I think than thirteen in Number at various Times and in different Reigns, a new One ſeems now as abſolutely requiſite as ever. Every Law of this Kind appears rather to have been an Eſſay, than an Eſtabliſhment, and was no ſooner promulged and put in Force, but new Inconveniencies aroſe, or further Imperfections were diſcovered. Perfect, indeed, no human Eſtabliſhment can ever be expected to be: The wiſeſt Scheme, we can contrive, will not only be found to be deficient at the firſt, but ſoon to want great Amendment, and muſt every now and then be altered and ſuited to the preſent Times and Circumſtances. When the Poor Law was firſt made in the Forty Third of Queen *Elizabeth*, it was thought to be extremely well calculated to anſwer the End: Namely, to provide

vide Bread for the impotent Poor, and Employment, and thereby Bread for all other Poor. But the Expence upon the firſt of theſe Articles has now riſen to an immenſe and intollerable Sum; and the Deſign of the Legiſlature as to the Second, has been in a Manner quite fruſtrated. Indeed, the ſetting the Poor to work, and keeping them from wandering, appears to have been the main Deſign of that Law: And if this Part of the Law had been duly executed, the Burthen as to the other Part, the Maintenance of the impotent Poor, could never have been very heavy, for the Number would have been inconſiderable. The two Members of the Law ſhould at leaſt keep pace together, and only have been obligatory in Conjunction. But a Failure or Neglect of employing the Poor forced ſome, and tempted others to take the Benefit provided for the Relief of the Poor; and has now made the Expence thereof ſwell out to an enormous Size.

The firſt Compilers of the Poor Law were no doubt very wiſe and good Men: The Miniſters I ſuppoſe were chiefly concerned; and where or when were there better Miniſters? Their Goodneſs appeared in their kind Diſpoſition to eſtabliſh a Method for relieving all real Objects of Charity; and their Wiſdom and Goodneſs both appeared, in their endeavouring to find Work for thoſe that were able and willing to work, — in their endeavouring to fix Idlers and Vagrants to their proper Places of Habitation,

Habitation, and bring them to an honeſt and regular Way of getting a Livelihood, and thereby rendering them more happy in themſelves, and uſeful to the Community. But could they have foreſeen that this their main, this their latter Purpoſe, the fixing and employing the Poor, would have been ſo little anſwered, I believe they never would have paſſed a Law for the former Purpoſe, the compulſory relieving them; which in itſelf is liable to Abuſe, and productive of much Evil, but vaſtly more ſo when the other Part is not kept up, which ſhould be a check and controul upon it.

Many bad Conſequences, I doubt not, were then foreſeen, or apprehended from the Law to relieve Paupers: for moſt of the following Objections do naturally ariſe againſt it.

In the firſt Place, it is difficult in many Caſes to determine, who are real Paupers, or proper Objects of Pariſh Charity. It is ſo eaſy to perſonate Miſery, and feign Diſtreſs, that you are oftentimes at a Loſs to know, whether a Man's Wants be real or pretended, and whether you ought to relieve him as a Pauper, or puniſh him as an Impoſter. The Idle, the Bold, the Impudent are always moſt forward to offer themſelves, and moſt clamorous for Relief: while the baſhful Poor, the really diſtreſſed, keep aloof, and almoſt ſtarve in Silence, and are aſhamed and afraid to open their Mouths for Charity, and come a begging. No Law can define who are, or who are not properly Paupers. Some, with all the Exteriors of

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Character may have private Sums, and unknown Reſources for a Maintenance: And others, tho' all Naſtineſs, Poverty and Rags, ſhall be far from being Paupers indeed; — ſhall deſerve Chaſtiſement rather than Charity, as having brought themſelves into Diſtreſs by their Vices and Wickedneſs; while ſeveral poor Houſe-keepers, Petty-Tradeſmen, and ſmall Leaſe-holders or Renters, by Reaſon of ſickly Wives, and a long Train of Children, or other Accidents and Misfortunes, ſhall be the greateſt Objects as to the Spirit of the Act, and yet not come within the Benefit of it: nay, ſhall be obliged to pay towards the Maintenance of Perſons that are much leſs in want than themſelves.

In the ſecond Place, tho' the Point was fixed and ſettled, as to who ſhall be deemed Paupers, yet it would be difficult to fix the Degree of Charity they ſhould be entitled to, and adjuſt the Pay to the Wants and Merits of the Receivers; for ſurely mere Poverty does not entitle every one to an equal Portion: great Regard ought to be had to the Cauſes of a Man's Poverty. If one Perſon by his own ill Conduct be brought into Diſtreſs, by Idleneſs, Sloath, Luxury, Drunkenneſs, Gluttony or Whoredom: and another be reduced by unnavoidable Misfortunes, by Sickneſs, Old Age, Fire, Storm, loſs in Trade, Shipwreck, a hard Farm, or ſickly expenſive Family; tho' the Wants of theſe two Perſons may be equal, ſurely their Claims to be relieved are far from being ſo. As Want is the natural Conſe-

quence of the former of theſe Perſons Behaviour, ſo is it the natural Puniſhment; and neither the Laws of God or Man ever deſign'd that ſuch a Perſon ſhould be thrown a Burthen upon others, and have the Privilege of demanding a Maintenance.

Juſtices, indeed, have a diſcretionary Power to determine who are Paupers, and what Relief they ſhall be entitled to: But Juſtices may not be able to determine a-right, any more than the Pariſhioners in Veſtry. Juſtices often live a great Way off from the Pariſh of the Perſon that applies for Relief, and are unacquainted with his Circumſtances and Character; and conſequently, deceived by a plauſible Story, which Idlers are ſeldom at a Loſs to make out, and not at all intereſted in the Expence, may be prevail'd upon to grant Relief to thoſe that don't want or deſerve it, or in too great a Proportion to thoſe that do.

In the third Place, ſuch a Law has a Tendency to hurt Induſtry, Care and Frugality. The Fear of one Day coming to Want, is a ſtrong Motive with moſt People to be induſtrious, careful and ſober; and to make uſe of their Youth, and Health, and Strength, to provide ſomething for Accidents, Sickneſs, and the Imbecillities of Old Age. But this Motive is much weakened, when a Man has the Proſpect of Pariſh Pay to rely on in Caſe of future Wants or Misfortunes: And too many, I'm afraid, truſting to this have neglected fair Opportunities of gaining

a tolerable

a tolerable Competence, and have become chargeable upon the firſt Ceſſation of their Labour, whether by Sickneſs, Old Age, want of Employ, or otherwiſe. The Sluggard, upon this Preſumption, is tempted to continue in Sloth; the Glutton, as he receives his Gains, eats them, and the Drunkard, drinks them. In ſhort, Men labour leſs and ſpend more; and the very Law that provides for the Poor, makes Poor.

Fourthly, A Law to enforce Relief, tends to deſtroy the Principle it proceeds from, the Principle of Charity. All Virtue muſt be free: If you force Charity you deſtroy her, with reſpect to the Author. 'If left to my own Liberty, I 'ſhould be willing to do for the Poor to the ut-'moſt of my Power: But it's grating to be o-'bliged to it. I then part with my Money as 'a Tax, not as a Benevolence; and there is no 'Kindneſs or Merit in what I do. As Charity 'is ſaid to cover a Multitude of Sins, a Chriſtian 'by being forced to it, may think himſelf de-'prived of the Bleſſing of it. My Mind is 'quite charitably diſpoſed: but my Income, 'conſidering my Exigencies, is ſmall; and I'm 'oblig'd to pay ſo much to the Poor by Law, 'that I am not of Ability to beſtow in voluntary 'Contributions. I already do more by Com-'pulſion, than I'm well able to do.' This checks and weakens the charitable Principle within: and this Principle, by not being exerciſed, becomes languid, grows weaker and

weaker, and in Time, perhaps, is quite extinguiſhed. I appeal to any Gentleman that lives where they are burthened with a numerous Poor, what Heart has he to give or ſend, as was cuſtomary in former Times, Corn, or Fleſh, or Money, to ſuch or ſuch a Pauper, or poor Family, when he already murmurs and grudges at what he's forced to part with by a Rate on his Stock, or Eſtate? The diſtreſſed are many Times worſe provided for now, than when there was no Law for relieving them. People are forced to harden their Hearts, and dare not take in a poor Wretch for fear of bringing a Charge on the Pariſh. Miſerable Creatures, ſick and deſtitute, far diſtant from or without a Settlement, are bandy'd about, and drove from Door to Door, till at laſt they are ſtarved in a Barn, or found dead in the Street. What are now become of the Poor-Boxes, and Public-Gatherings, the uſual and commendable Methods heretofore of providing for the Poor? So little is now given to Poor-Boxes, that many Pariſhes will not be at the ſmall Expence of erecting or keeping them up. And Collections, whether for Pariſh Poor, or diſtant Sufferers by Briefs are ſo much dwindled and diſcouraged, that the Collectors are almoſt aſhamed, and hardly think it worth their while to go about. Even the Oblations made at the Altar are found, I'm afraid, to leſſen more and more, and many ſeem to give them rather out of Cuſtom, and a formal Compliance with the Words of the Prayer, than from a charitable Heart; the Sum being commonly

monly ſo diſproportionate to their Circumſtances. The Generality indeed begin to think, and ſay, that giving to the Poor is only giving to other People, whoſe Eſtates muſt be eaſed, by leſſening the Wants of their Poor. It is for this Reaſon, in part, that ſo little hath been left to the Poor of late Years by Gift or Legacy: Such Bequeſts being now looked upon only as Aids to the Land-owners, or Contributors of the Pariſh. What Charity there is in the Nation, hath taken another Turn: And People moſtly chuſe to give, what they have to give, to public Works of Charity, to Hoſpitals, to Infirmaries, and to Schools for the Education and Maintenance of poor Children, where they think they have ſome Merit and Honour in their Charity, and the good Works are the Effects of their voluntary Benefactions.

Fifthly, As Force tends to deſtroy Charity in the Giver, ſo does it Gratitude in the Receiver. * *Seneca* juſtly obſerves, there is only ſo much Good-will owing for a Favour as was ſhewn in beſtowing it. And therefore where no Will was concerned in the Deed, no Return can be expected. The Pauper thanks not me for any thing he receives. He has a right to it, he ſays, by Law, and if I won't give, he'll go to the Juſtices, and compel me. So that, what is ſtill more provoking to the Contributor, he's forced to pay largely to the Poor, and at the

* De Benef. Lib. i. Cap. 1.

ſame

ſame time perhaps ſees them ungrateful and ſaucy, affronting and threatening, and looking upon themſelves as equally good, if not better Men than their Supporters, without Dependency or Obligation. This muſt of Courſe create a great deal of ill-blood, hatred, murmuring and Indignation on the Side of the Payer, and make him think it an Invaſion on his natural Right for ſuch, in ſpite of him, to go away with a Portion of the Gains of his honeſt Induſtry: And, in Conſequence of this, ſtill more Diſreſpect, Ingratitude and Contempt on the Side of the Pauper. Beneficence on one Hand, and Thankfulneſs on the other, are moſt amiable Virtues, and are the great Bonds of Union, Friendſhip and Society.

New Needs, new Helps, new Habits riſe,
That graft Benevolence on Charities. †

And happy that Nation, where the People live in natural Love and Dependence, and the ſeveral Ranks of Kings and Subjects, Maſters and Servants, Parents and Children, High and Low, Rich and Poor, are attached to each other by the reciprocal good Offices of Kindneſs and Gratitude: But this happy Connection between High and Low, Rich and Poor, once ſo ſtrong in this Kingdom, ſeems in Danger of being quite broke off in Time. The Poor complain of the Rich as hard-hearted, ſelfiſh, cruel and

† Eſſay on Man.

oppreſſive:

oppreſſive: And the Rich complain of the Poor, as idle, extravagant, thankleſs, and impudent. It's greatly for the Intereſt of Charity, that the Objects of it ſhould be reſpectful and grateful. We think our Kindneſs in a manner repaid, when it is thankfully received: It's a Pleaſure then to have done it, and an Incitement to do more. But as long as Charity is forced, we can never expect to ſee the Receivers of it either grateful or reſpectful.

Sixthly, It might be apprehended, that a Tax to relieve Paupers would be attended with many other co-incident Expences. It very plainly appears to be ſo now. Every Tax laid on a Nation, is always attended with ſome additional Charge, on account of ſecuring, levying and collecting it: And the Sums raiſed for the Poor have been not a little increaſed by ſeveral concomitant Expences. Pariſh-Officers may ſometimes be blamable in favouring their Acquaintance or Kinsfolk in the Diſpoſal of the Pariſh-Money, in ſpending conſiderable Sums at their Veſtry-Meetings, making the Rates, paſſing the Accounts, and applying the Money in their Hands to Feaſts and Entertainments, or putting it in their own Pockets, and impoſing upon the Pariſhioners by falſe Accounts. There are many Fees to the Clerk of the Peace, Juſtices Clerks, *&c.* for ſigning the Poor Books, for Summons, Warrants, Orders, Reverſion of Orders, Pariſh-Indentures, and other Buſineſs relative to the Poor. And tho' in ſome Counties, particularly the

the County of *Somerſet*, as I lately obſerved, a Table of theſe Fees is publickly ſet up, that all Perſons may have Notice, yet in general it's certain theſe Fees have increaſed, and in many Places, I'm told, are ſtill increaſing. The Indentures for binding out poor Children Apprentices are required to be on Stamps. If a poor Perſon be taken ill, or meet with the Accident of a broken Limb, &c. and ſend to an Apothecary or Surgeon, 'tis a Chance now-a-days whether they will come to attend him, unleſs the Pariſh Officers engage for Payment. There are Inſtances of ſome poor Objects periſhing, while the Doctor, as he is call'd, has been parlying about Stipulations with the Overſeers. And this further confirms the Point abovemention'd, that the Poor-Law tends to deſtroy Charity. And tho', when the Pariſh pays, 'tis an Act of Charity, and conſequently the Doctor ſhould charge as low as poſſible, yet very often he conſiders not the Poverty of the Patient, but the Wealth of the Pariſh, and makes out a very handſome Bill accordingly. But the greateſt additional Expence ariſes from the Trouble and Difficulty of fixing the Settlements of Paupers. When the Statute of *Elizabeth* for relieving the Poor firſt took place, the Burthen was light and inconſiderable. Few applied for Relief. It was a Shame and a Scandal for a Perſon to throw himſelf on a Pariſh: And Parents, Children, Relations and Friends commonly endeavoured all they could, as well as the Party himſelf, to

prevent

prevent it. But the Sweets of Pariſh-Pay being once felt, more and more Perſons ſoon put in for a Share of it. One cried, he as much wanted, and might as well accept it, as another; the Shame grew leſs and leſs, and Numbers encouraged and countenanced one another.

Defendit numerus, junctæque umbone Phalanges.
JUVENAL.

And tho' Badges by the 8th and 9th of *William*, ſeemed rightly ordered to be fix'd as ſome public Marks of Shame, and to diſtinguiſh Pariſh Paupers from thoſe induſtrious Poor that live by their own Endeavours: Yet theſe Marks of Diſtinction have had but little effect, and for that Reaſon, I ſuppoſe, have been almoſt every where neglected.—By Numbers thus throwing themſelves more and more upon Pariſhes, the Poor became a great Burthen on the Publick; ſo great, that in thoſe Pariſhes, where half a Rate or leſs once ſerved, we find four, five and ſix Rates now very often aſſeſſed and levied, or twelve Times more than at the firſt Eſtabliſhment: For theſe Reaſons one ſhould not be ſurprized to hear, that the whole Sum laid out on the Poor-Account in *South-Britain* for four Years laſt paſt, amounted at a Medium, to near Three Millions yearly, according to the Accounts given in to Parliament laſt Seſſion, which is equal to a Land-Tax of Six Shillings in the Pound.

Now the Number and Expence of the Poor thus increaſing, People ſoon began to grow uneaſy at it, and great Diſputes aroſe between Pariſhes about the Settlement and Removal of Paupers: And tho' theſe Diſputes proceed from an Endeavour to eaſe, and ſometimes do eaſe particular Pariſhes, yet do they vaſtly increaſe the Poor-Charge, with repect to the Nation in general. The Legiſlature could never yet lay down one certain ſtanding Rule for determining all Caſes ariſing upon this intricate Affair of Settlements. The Juſtices are often forced to leave the Matter to Council, and Councellors very likely ſend you to the King's Bench: and the Delay and Expence of going hither, may ſometimes be ſo great, that it were better to ſit down quiet with the firſt Loſs. Beſides, that here you are not ſure of Succeſs, as Caſes ſeemingly the ſame, for no two Caſes are ſtrictly the ſame, may prove to be differently determined. But, without going ſo far as this, conſider the Expence only of attending firſt at a private Seſſion, getting an Order, removing the Pauper, perhaps with a Wife and Children, to a diſtant County, it may be, from one End of the Kingdom to the other: And afterwards attending again very likely at the Quarter Seſſions, to try the Order, and thereupon an Appeal from a powerful Pariſh, backed perhaps by one of the Bench, have the Order quaſhed and reverſed, the Poor returned upon you, with Coſts of Suit to pay, over and above all your own Charges of

Journeys,

Journeys, Attorneys, Council, carrying up Witneſſes, *&c.* Beſides theſe, there are many other incidental Charges ariſing from other Quarters, from Conſtables, Highways, Bridges, Land-Tax-Deficiencies, Goal and Hoſpital Money, Doctors, *&c.* So that the Poor-Rate may be conſidered as a kind of Pack-Horſe, and made to bear all kind of Burthens; and in Time, very likely, we ſhall ſee the Non-Eſſentials exceed the Neceſſaries.

Seventhly and Laſtly, I add, that the forced and expenſive Way of relieving the Poor, has put many Gentlemen and Pariſhes upon contriving all poſſible Methods of leſſening their Number, particularly by diſcouraging and ſometimes hindering poor Perſons from marrying, when they appear likely to become chargeable, and thereby preventing an Increaſe of uſeful Labourers;—by diſcharging Servants in their laſt Quarter, and preventing them from gaining a Settlement, whereby they become Vagrants perhaps;—by pulling down Cottages, and ſuffering no Places of Inhabitation for Paupers, whereby the Eſtates are flung into a few Hands, and ſeveral Pariſhes are in a Manner depopulated;—by hindering Handy-Craftſmen and Manufactures from ſettling amongſt them, whereby ſome ſorts of Buſineſs are monopoliz'd and ſpoil'd, Trade is injured, and ingenious Artiſts can find no Encouragement. *England* complains of a Want of uſeful Hands for Agriculture, Manufactures, for the Land and Sea Service: And for remedy-

ing this, a Bill for a general Naturalization was lately introduced. But this Remedy, in all Probability, would have increaſed our Diſeaſe; that Shoal of ragged Foreigners, which ſuch a Bill would very likely have brought over, would only have filled us with a ſtill greater Number of Poor, and would have brought a very ſmall Addition of ſerviceable Men to the Public. Uſeful induſtrious People ſeldom leave their own Country, unleſs in Time of great Diſtreſs. The proper Way to increaſe the *Inhabitants* of a Nation, is to encourage Matrimony among the lower ſort of People, and thereby ſtock the Nation with *natural-born* Subjects. This was the Way of the ancient *Romans*. The *French* we ſee are taking this Courſe: And the *Engliſh* Parliament had very lately a Scheme before them to the ſame Purpoſe; But no Scheme, I believe, will ever ſucceed, as long as Pariſhes are ſo apprehenſive of Paupers, and take all Manner of Precautions to prevent a Multiplication of Inhabitants. When the Miniſter marries a Couple, tho' but a poor Couple, he rightly prays, 'that 'they may be fruitful in Procreation of Children.' But many of the Pariſhioners pray for the very contrary, and perhaps complain of him for marrying Perſons, that, ſhould they have a Family of Children, *might likely become chargeable.*

Conſidering theſe Objections againſt the Law to enforce Poor-Pay, one may wonder how it came at firſt to be enacted. *Seneca* in his third

Book

Book of Kindneſſes, diſcuſſing this Queſtion, Whether Ingratitude ought to be made ſubject to Law, determines it in the Negative. And if the Beneficiary is not to be forced, why muſt the Benefactor? If Ingratitude is not to be made ſubject to Law, why ſhould Illiberality, Inhoſpitality be made ſubject? There are many Faults or Vices, as Avarice, Gluttony, certain Degrees of Impiety, Cruelty, which we don't find it expedient to puniſh by Law; but we think it ſufficient, according to the above Author's reaſoning, to condem them by our Abhorrence, and leave them among thoſe Things which we refer to the Gods as Avengers. And why might not want of Charity, which is a Species of Avarice or Cruelty, have been been left among theſe? 'No Nation, ſays he, except the *Medes*, ever 'allowed of an Action of Ingratitude. A ſtrong 'Argument this, that no ſuch Action ought to be 'allowed.' The ſame may be ſaid of the Poor Law. No Nation, if we except the *Jews*, who had ſomething of this kind in later Times, ever allowed of a Law to force Charity. A ſtrong Argument this, that no ſuch Law ought to be allowed. For if the Law had been right, and requiſite, and neceſſary, many States and Nations would long ago, no doubt, have adopted it. May not it ſeem very extraordinary then, that *England* ſhould be the only Nation that ſhould ever have come into ſuch a Law? Are there not Poor in other Countries, as well as in this? Are not the Wants and Diſtreſſes of the Poor rather

greater

greater in moſt other Countries, as *England* is ſo fruitful a Place, produces all the Neceſſaries, and moſt of the Conveniencies of Life in plenty, has Tillage and Manufactures in Abundance, and conſequently can find ſufficient Employ for all her Poor? Or is there no Charity, no Compaſſion, think we, in other Countries, but the Poor are utterly neglected, and left to ſhift for themſelves, or periſh? No: the Poor ſuffer no more in other Countries than in this; nay, in many Countries, particularly in *Holland* and ſome Parts of *France*, the Poor are better taken Care of: And, notwithſtanding we have a Law in Being to exact a Proviſion for them, and ſuch a vaſt Sum in conſequence of that Law is annually expended, more Beggars, Vagrants, and diſtreſſed Objects are every Day to be ſeen amongſt us, than in any Place of equal Compaſs on the Globe beſide. The Law, at the ſame Time that it has been attended with ſo many Evils, doth not ſeem to have produced even that ſingle good Effect it was thought it could not fail of producing; I mean, the Relief of the Impotent, and the Diminution of the Number of the diſtreſſed: For we have ſtill the ſame complaining in our Streets, and Cries of the Poor are as numerous and as loud as ever. So that, tho' the Law as at firſt deſigned, was quite charitable and good, I think we may now apply to it the *Italian* Proverb mentioned by Lord *Bacon*, * '*Tanto buen, che val mente*; it 'is ſo good, that it is good for nothing.'

* Eſſay on Goodneſs, and Goodneſs of Nature.

God

God Almighty, indeed, the Helper of the Poor and Friendleſs, ſeems to have made a human Law for the Relief of them unneceſſary, by having implanted a natural Law for that Purpoſe in every Man's own Breaſt. We have an innate Philanthropy. We carry, as I may ſay, a Poor-Law about with us. Nature ſtrongly inclines, and even forces us to commiſſerate and help the Wretched. The Principles or Paſſions of Love, Pity, Compaſſion, Sympathy and ſo forth, are wrought into our very Frame. Who is not affected and concerned at ſeeing Human Nature in Diſtreſs? Who hath not got a Fellow-Feeling for the Sufferings and Afflictions of his Fellow Creatures? Who, upon beholding a poor Object in Nakedneſs, Cold and Want, is not prompted from within to compaſſionate his unhappy Caſe, and diſpoſed to give him a Morſel of Bread to feed him, and ſomething for a Garment to cover him? The Heart of Man commonly bleeds at the Sight of others Sufferings, and a good-natured Man to uſe the Expreſſion of the excellent Writer abovementioned, is like the noble Tree, that is wounded itſelf, when it gives the Balm. There may be an occaſional, or an acquired Malignity in ſome few obdurate Breaſts. But I don't think, with Lord *Bacon*, there is a natural Malignity, or that there be any, that don't affect in ſome degree the Good of others. A Man utterly devoid of all ſocial and humane Affections, and quite unconcerned at the Wants and Miſeries of others,

would

would be as much a Monſter in Nature, as one born without the Senſes of Seeing, Hearing, or Feeling; and would deſerve to be driven out of human Society, as a Lion, a Bear, or the worſt of Savages.

No Bandit fierce, no Tyrant drunk with Pride,
No cavern'd Hermit reſts ſelf-ſatisfy'd.
Who moſt to ſhun, or hate mankind pretend,
Seek an Admirer, or would fix a Friend.

ESSAY ON MAN.

Theſe kindly Affections then being implanted in our Nature, are continually exciting us to the Exerciſe of them; and in exerciſing them, we not only feel an immediate Pleaſure and Gratification, but we at the ſame time obey the Will of God, plainly ſignified to us, by his having implanted theſe Affections in us. And every Man moreover, as a frail and ſocial Being, is obliged to take part in other Perſon's Sufferings, as we cannot live in this World without mutual Aſſiſtance, and as no one knows, but ſuch a Man's unfortunate Caſe may one time prove to be his own.

Upon theſe Principles Mankind have ever been ready and diſpoſed to aſſiſt their indigent Fellow-Creatures, and real Objects of Charity, if their Diſtreſs was properly known, have ſeldom failed, I believe, to find Help in Time of Need.

Revelation has further ſtrengthened theſe Principles of Affection, and God has not only enjoyned

joined us by a natural, but alſo by his written Law to be kind and aſſiſtant to the Poor. The *Jewiſh* Law is very full of Exhortations and Commands to this Purpoſe, and God ſeems to take the Poor into his peculiar Protection. They were to be admitted to partake of the Sacrifices ſlain in the Temple—The Corners and Gleanings of the Corn Fields were to be left for them, and the Gleanings likewiſe of their Vineyards. In the Sabbatical Years, and Years of Jubilee, the whole Produce of the Land was to be left in common for the Poor, the Fatherleſs, and the Widow. Beſide theſe and other public, they were likewiſe entitled to private Charities. * *If there be among you a poor Man of one of thy Brethren, thou ſhalt not harden thy Heart, nor ſhut thine Hand from thy poor Brother. But thou ſhalt open thine Hand wide unto Him, and ſhalt ſurely lend Him ſufficient for his Need, which He wanteth: Becauſe that for this Thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy Works, and in all thou putteſt thine Hand unto. For the Poor ſhall never ceaſe out of the Land.*——In after Times there were Collections made for the Poor in the Synagogues every Sabbath Day.—The Goſpel has carried this Charity to the Poor ſtill farther, by exacting a higher Degree of it, and extending it not only to our Brother or Neighbour, but to the Poor of whatever Nation or Kindred, to the Poor of all the Earth.

* Deut. xv. 7.

Chriſt teaches us †, that every Man in Diſtreſs is to be looked upon as our Neighbour, and is entitled to our Mercy and Relief. *A Chriſtian is a Citizen of the World, and his Heart ſhould be no Iſland, cut off from other Lands, but a Continent that joins to them.* Our Saviour has carried the Duty of Alms-Giving to the higheſt Pitch: He practiſed it Himſelf, He recommended it to his Followers, and adviſed thoſe, that would be his Diſciples indeed, to ſell what they had, and give to the Poor. *When thou makeſt a Dinner or a Supper*, ſays he, Luke xiv. *call not thy Friends, nor thy Brethren, neither thy Kinſmen, nor thy rich Neighbours: Leſt They alſo invite Thee again, and a Recompence be made Thee. But when thou makeſt a Feaſt, call the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, the Blind: And thou ſhalt be bleſſed. For they cannot recompenſe Thee. But Thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the juſt.* Having Pity on the Poor is lending to the Lord: To thoſe that have fed the Hungry, and given Drink to the Thirſty, have received the Stranger hoſpitably into their Houſes, and viſited them that were ſick or in Priſon, our Lord ſays, Matt. xxv. *Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the Leaſt of theſe my Brethren* (pointing to the Poor and Needy) *ye have done it unto me.* The Church in the Beginning of the Goſpel maintained her own Poor. Many rich Perſons contributed largely, and ſome

† Luke x. 30, &c.

ſold

ſold all that that they had, and laid the Money at the Apoſtles Feet, and Diſtribution was made unto every Man according as he had Need. Sometimes in caſe of Death and Famine, Collections were made in diſtant Churches. The Diſciples at *Antioch*, on ſuch an Occaſion, ſent Relief to their Brethren that dwelt in *Judea*. Biſhops were given to Hoſpitality; and their Houſes were an Aſylum for all poor Strangers, and perſecuted diſtreſſed Chriſtians.

Conſidering then the natural, ſocial, and ſelf-intereſted Motives we have for aſſiſting the Diſtreſſed, together with theſe higher and ſtronger Motives, ariſing from a religious View of the Caſe: Conſidering that we may by our Acts of Charity, ſave a Soul from Death, and hide a Multitude of Sins,—may lay up Treaſures in Heaven,—become rich towards God, and gain an Inheritance in his glorious Kingdom: Conſidering all this, I ſay, one ſhould think, that the Proviſion for the Poor and Needy might ſafely have been left to voluntary Contributions, and private Charity.

How have the Poor been all along maintained for ſo many Ages, in the ſeveral Parts, and Climates of the World? For the Poor have never ceaſed from the Earth: They have been found to appear, more or leſs, in every Age, and every Country. Sloth, Extravagance, Sickneſs, Misfortunes of Fire, of Storm, or Inundation, Lameneſs, Blindneſs, the Weakneſs of Infancy and old Age;—Theſe Cauſes have

never failed, nor ever will fail, to produce in every Country, Poverty and Diſtreſs among great Numbers. But ſuch Perſons have generally been taken Care of one way or other: And few, I believe, if it was not ſome how their own Fault, have periſhed for want of Suſtenance. Parents, Children, Friends, Neighbours, and Acquaintance, have always ſome of them been ready to do ſomething themſelves, and to make a Collection, or recommend the Caſe to others, that might be willing and able. Princes, and Nobles, and other rich Men have allotted ſomething. It may be ſaid too, very great Objects of Charity, as the Blind, the Lame, the Decrepid, whoſe Friends were utterly unable to ſupport them have commonly been ſuffered in moſt Countries to take their Stand at the Corners of Streets, or the Doors of Temples, at any public Places of Paſſage or Reſort, in order to make their Diſtreſs more known, and move the Charity of Travellers, Paſſengers, or Worſhippers, by a View of their pitiable Caſe. Thus blind * *Bartimeus* ſat by the Highway Side begging: And, aſking an Alms of Jeſus Chriſt, as he paſſed by, received that bleſſed Alms, the Recovery of his Sight: Whereby he was put into a Capacity of Gaining a Livelihood, and had no Occaſion to aſk for Charity any more. Several other poor Objects in different Places, our Saviour found begging, and, ſo far from reprov-

* Mark x.

ing

ing them, always ſhewed Compaſſion on them. We read in Acts iii. *A certain Man lame from his Mother's Womb, was daily carried, and laid at the Gate of the Temple, which is called* Beautiful, *to aſk Alms of them that entered into the Temple; who, ſeeing the Apoſtles,* Peter *and* John, *about to go into the Temple, aſked an Alms. And* Peter *faſtening his Eyes upon Him, with* John, *ſaid, Look on us. The Man immediately gave heed unto them, naturally expecting to receive ſomething of them.* Then *Peter* ſaid, *Silver and Gold I have none: But ſuch as I have, give I unto Thee: In the Name of* Jeſus Chriſt *of* Nazareth, *riſe up and walk.*

Such Petitioners were generally tolerated and encouraged, as long as their Diſtreſs was real, and their Means of Support otherwiſe inſufficient. For the idle, the diſſolute, the valiant Beggars, as our Law calls them, were neither then ſo common, nor had they learnt ſo well to impoſe upon the Good-natured, under the Maſk of pretended Infirmity and Want. For at preſent ſuch a Way of Relief ought to be diſcouraged and ſuppreſſed, and the Lame, the Blind, the Impotent be ſupported ſome other way; ſuppreſſed I ſay, not as being wrong in itſelf (for it is really otherwiſe, and many People muſt ſee the Object before they will have Pity on it;) but as giving a Pretence for Strolling, and an Opportunity to a Number of Impoſtors to obtrude themſelves on the Public, and deceive or rob the Unwary. *Rome* was for a long Time a wiſe

and

and well-governed State. How were the Poor maintained there? The People often complained of great Hardſhips, particularly of the Exactions and Oppreſſions of the Nobles, and would often be clamorous, and inſiſt on enjoying, or being reſtored to certain Privileges and Immunities. But the Poor, properly ſo called, were for the moſt part well taken care of. *Cato* the Elder, indeed, was for having Slaves to be knocked on the Head, when become old, decrepid and uſeleſs, as a Piece of good Oeconomy, and a Way to ſave Charges. But his rigid Virtue has ever been juſtly impeached, for this monſtrous Inſtance of Inhumanity and Cruelty. When the Rich begun to bear hard upon the Poor, and Creditors had proceeded not only to bind and ſhut up, but even to exerciſe corporal Puniſhment, to whip and beat their Debtors, a Law was made in the 260th Year of the City, to reſtrain theſe Oppreſſions and Cruelties, and no poor Man, at leaſt while he ſerved in the Wars, could be touched in his Perſon or Eſtate. Many of the rich Senators kept an open Table, and had always a great Number of Clients, Freedmen, Slaves, and poor Citizens, Retainers at their Houſe, and Partakers of their Bounty. Some of the principal Magiſtrates and Citizens gave every now and then, eſpecially in Time of Scarcity, or at Elections, which were moſtly annual, conſiderable Quantities of Corn, and all that came were welcome to a Share. Ships were very often ſent abroad for Corn, and the State ordered

it

it to be doled out to the Poor, or ſold at moderate Prices. Generals returning from the Wars in Triumph, never failed to remember the Poor, and gave away among the People Largeſſes of Corn, and Money. Friends likewiſe always made Collections among themſelves for a Friend reduced and in Diſtreſs. The ἔρανος * among the *Greeks* was alſo a Contribution much of this Kind. Only the ἔρανος had this Peculiar in it, that if the diſtreſſed Perſon ever afterwards came to be of Ability, he was to make full Reſtitution. It was not an abſolute Gift, becauſe there was a tacit Condition and Expectation of Repayment: Nor a real Debt, becauſe there was no Intereſt payable, nor any fixed Time, or compulſory Obligation, for Repayment. The *Romans*, it ſeems, were ſo generous to their Friends in Caſe of Misfortunes, that it was ſometimes an Advantage to have been a Sufferer, and the Liberality of the Contributors more than made up the Loſſes of the Petitioners. Hence the Satyriſt ſays:

Suſpectus tanquam Ipſe ſuas incenderit Ædes.

And Martial,

Collatum eſt Decies: Rogo, non potes Ipſe videri
Incendiſſe tuam, Tongiliane, Domum?

Beſides theſe Methods of providing for the Poor, the *Romans* had one other very good one, equally practicable with us in *England* now, and

* See Theophraſ. Char. xvii.

that

that was, the ſending away the able ſuperfluous Poor into the conquered Countries and Provinces, whereby they became happy in themſelves, and greatly ſtrengthened and enlarged their Mother Country.

I muſt further add, that Parents were obliged to take Care of their Children; and Children of their aged impotent Parents: This indeed the Law of Nature and of Virtue, as well as the municipal Law of moſt States, exacts and enjoins. The principal Laws of *Solon*, and of other States of *Greece*, were adopted at *Rome*: And among the Laws of *Solon* this ſtands as chief: εαν τις μη τρεφη τους γονεας, ἀτιμος ἐστω. If any one ſupports not his Parents let him be deemed Infamous. He was unworthy of enjoying any Honour or Preferment in the State.

Theophraſtus, * deſcribing a Deſperado, or an audacious abandoned Fellow, gives it as one chief Part of his Character that he doth not maintain his Mother: την μητερα μη τρεφειν. Not to maintain the Father is ſuppos'd to be bad; but not to maintain the Mother is ſuppos'd to be worſe; it is ſhameful and ſhocking, as the Mother is the weaker Sex, and is more apt to ſtand in need of Help, and having undergone all the Cares and Pains of bearing, nurſing, &c. has more Obligations due to her. One of the principal Laws of *Moſes'* Table, and the ſame again we find enforced in the Goſpel, is, *Honour*

* Char. vi. ΠΕΡΙ ΑΠΟΝΟΙΑΣ.

thy

thy Father and thy Mother. And St. *Paul* obſerves, † that this is the firſt Commandment with Promiſe: with the Promiſe of a peculiar Bleſſing annexed to it, namely, long Life. By honouring Parents, I need not ſay, is meant paying them all proper Regard and Obedience, and affording all the Help and Aſſiſtance in our Power. The Poor Law in *England* has not ſuperceded this Obligation, but Children are ſtill bound, if able, to maintain their Parents, as Parents are their Children.

That Parents ſhould maintain their Children, tho' equally right and neceſſary, has not been thought to want ſo much to be enforced. Affection is generally ſeen to deſcend more than to aſcend; and it is neceſſary it ſhould be ſo, for the Increaſe and Propagation of the Species; and moſt Parents ſhew a greater Love to their Children, than Children ſhew back to their Parents, and conſequently have leſs need to be compelled to it. Children, like Buds ſoon open into Bloſſoms, which are not only ſweet and lovely in themſelves, but are ſtill the more valued, as they are expected to grow on to Maturity, and bring forth Fruit: But aged helpleſs Parents, alas! conſidering the Treatment they often meet with, may be compared to withered and decayed Trees, that have ſhed their Leaves and Fruit, are become Sapleſs, and paſt bearing, and by their Continuance are only thought to encumber

† Eph. vi. 2.

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the Ground. The Father thinks he lives in his Offspring, and that if he can but ſupport his Son in his Youth, he will fully repay all his Coſt and Care, and be the Staff and Support of him in his old Age: But the Son has no ſuch Proſpect of future Service from a decrepid Sire, who is too frequently conſidered as a Burthen, and all that is given or done for him, as ſo much loſt or thrown away. *Anchiſes* could eaſily dandle about the Infant *Æneas* in his Arms, but *Æneas* found it a heavy Load to carry his aged Father on his Back. The Innocence, Health, and fondling Ways of Children, pleaſe and endear; but the Infirmities, Maladies, Croſſneſs and Peeviſhneſs of old Age, are diſagreeable and provoke. Parents, therefore, have not commonly ſo much need of a Law to oblige them to maintain their Children: they are of themſelves ſtrongly diſpoſed to it, and for the moſt Part are of a competent Age for it: The ſame Perſons that can beget and bear Children, being generally young and ſtrong enough to work and provide for them. The Duty, however, of reciprocal Aſſiſtance has always been thought equally imcumbent: and the Apoſtle with great Reaſon ſays: * *If any provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own Houſe, He hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an Infidel.*

Theſe Methods then of taking Care of the Poor ſeem to have anſwered the End, and are

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

what

what Humanity and Good-Policy naturally dictate; and what, allowing for Difference of Times and Circumſtances, have obtained more or leſs, I believe, in all civilized Countries of the World.

The *Dutch*, one ſhould think, would be troubled with a great Number of Poor, as their Country is ſo populous, and of ſo ſmall extent, and doth not afford Bread-Corn for a Tenth of the Inhabitants, nor any native Commodities to export, or native Materials to work up into Manufactures, whereby the Poor might have Employment; and yet, we are aſſured, a Beggar is rarely to be ſeen among them: Their Manner of taking Care of the Poor is, by all that have ſeen it, commended, and deſerves to be imitated. According to the Account of an ingenious modern Writer, their firſt Care is to provide proper Materials and Inſtruments for Labour, and ſet thoſe, that are able, to work; thoſe that are not able, are taken care of in Hoſpitals: And thoſe idle Vagrants that are able and not willing to work, are taken up and ſent to the Raſp-Houſe, or other Places of Labour and Correction, and forced to earn their Bread before they eat it. For the Maintenance of theſe Hoſpitals, where all the impotent Poor are kept, (beſides what is given towards them by well-diſpoſed People, and part of the Revenues of ſome ſecularized Monaſteries) they impoſe ſeveral little Taxes, as a Penny upon every one that paſſes thro' the Gate after Candle-Light, — upon Appointments

at Taverns and other Places where they have Boxes to put in Forfeitures for the Uſe of the Poor: Nay, at every Bargain, ſomething is reſerved for the ſame Uſe. To which muſt be added what is collected in Churches, and weekly by the Hoſpital Officers from the Inhabitants at their Doors. But here is no Aſſeſſment or Compulſion, every one gives as his Circumſtances enable, or charitable Diſpoſition inclines him: He puts his Alms with his own Hand into a long Purſe or Bag which the Collector holds out to him; ſo that God only and himſelf are privy to his Alms.--But the greateſt Relief which the Poor have, comes from a Quarter one could leaſt expect, and yet that can beſt ſpare it: The Play-Houſes, Mountebanks, and Muſic-Booths, pay the third Penny; and in ſome Cities, as *Amſterdam*, half the Money received. At the Play-Houſe in *Amſterdam*, which does not take in a Week ſo much as one of our Play-Houſes ſometimes in a Night, 'tis reckoned above 6000 *l.* is yearly collected for the Uſe of the Poor. In that City alone there are near Twenty One Thouſand maintain'd yearly. The Gaſt-Houſe, or Hoſpital for the Sick, deſerves a particular Deſcription; for its wiſe Inſtitutions I mean, not its Buildings. We ſhall only obſerve, that there is no need of recommending; the Door ſtands open to all Comers: The *Dutch* aſk no Queſtions, but receive every one there for God's Sake; even young Women, who have had a Misfortune, are well look'd after, the Children put

out

out to nurſe, and the Mother's no more troubled with them: This they do, not to encourage Libertiniſm, but to prevent Murders. The Hoſpital-Children are ſo tender in the Eye of the Government, that when any of them have Occaſion to travel, the Publick Track-Skuyts, or Paſſage-Boats, are obliged to carry them gratis. There is another Hoſpital, where all poor Travellers, without Diſtinction, are lodged and entertained for three Nights, but no longer. There is alſo in moſt Towns a Society of Burghers or Tradeſmen, who engage to ſupport one another on their happening to fail in the World: The Fund for this is raiſed inſenſibly, by each Member's paying a Trifle weekly.—This laſt excellent Practice has obtained in a great many Parts in *England*. The Wool-Combers of *Tiverton* have a common Stock for the Support of decayed Brethren of the Trade. There is likewiſe a publick Box for the ſame laudable Purpoſe at *Wellington*: And ſo I make no doubt there is in a great many other trading Towns in the Kingdom. The laſt quoted Writer mentions a Confraternity of this kind eſtabliſhed among the Tradeſmen and others at St. *Albans*: They pay only Three Pence a Week, and this Trifle enables them to maintain their Members diſabled for Work through Accidents, Sickneſs or Old Age, and allow them Seven Shillings a Week. It were to be wiſhed there were more of theſe Confraternities; they would give no ſmall Eaſe to Pariſhes, and be a much more genteel

teel Way of ſupporting unfortunate Tradeſmen. The Clergy in many Parts of the Kingdom aſſiſt the Widows and Children of their poor deceaſed Brethren, by ſubſcribing a ſmall Sum annually. And a Fund for the Support of Officers Widows by Land and Sea, is raiſed by a ſmall Deduction out of their monthly Pay.

And as the *Dutch* excel in the Management of their Poor, ſo the *French* perhaps come next to them: The Hoſpital-General of *Paris* is reckoned to exceed every Thing of the Kind in the whole World; it conſiſts of three diſtinct Houſes, in which commonly there are computed to be about Eleven or Twelve Thouſand Poor: Thoſe pinched in Circumſtances have no more to do but preſent themſelves, and immediately they are received. Beſide their Lodging, their Proviſion amounts to about Seven * Sols a Day: All Nations are received, and all treated alike; they ſend not a poor Creature from Pariſh to Pariſh. For the Sick, there are many Hoſpitals at *Paris*; the moſt famous was the *Hotel Dieu*, the largeſt perhaps in the World, which was burnt to the Ground in 1737. Every Body was received, Proteſtant, Catholic, Turk, and Jew; it buried them when dead, as well as cheriſhed them when living. The Hoſpital for Foundlings is an excellent Eſtabliſhment, and has wiſely been thought worthy of Imitation by the Engliſh. Beſides, almoſt every Pariſh in *France* has ſome ſort of Hoſpital and Charity School. They have alſo in every Church an Iron

* Or Three Pence Engliſh.

Iron Box, and ſo indeed we had formerly in all our Churches, to receive private Charities for the *Pauvres Honteaux*, the baſhful Poor; Perſons that greatly want, and yet are aſhamed to beg: whoſe Baſhfulneſs, therefore, deſerves much to be commended, and to have the Neceſſity of aſking prevented.

How were the Poor maintained in *England*, before the Law in the latter End of Queen *Elizabeth*? I ſuppoſe they had been as numerous in the preceding Reigns, as they were then.—'We are told the Church, that is the Abbies, Monaſteries, and other religious Houſes maintained them: And that when theſe religious Houſes were ſecularized, and given away, or ſold to Lay-Proprietors, in the Time of *Henry* the Eighth, and *Edward* the Sixth, the Poor were left deſtitute, and muſt have ſtarved, if they had not been provided for by Law.'—The Abbies, and other religious Houſes were many of them, no doubt, very liberal, and kept an open hoſpitable Table every Day. And the neighbouring Poor uſed to repair to them, and fill their Bellies, and very likely carry Home with them ſomething for their Families. The Poſſeſſors of thoſe religious Houſes received them from their Founders, on Condition, that they ſhould generouſly and charitably uſe and diſpoſe of them, for the Honour of God, and the Good of his Church and People. And this Condition ſhould at leaſt have accompanied the Alienation or Transfer. And tho' they were no longer to be applied to the Maintenance

tenance of Monkery and Popery, the Entail of Charity and Hoſpitality ſhould not have been cut off. Several of theſe Houſes were rather charitable than religious Foundations. The Name of *Crutched-Friars*, for Inſtance, plainly ſhews ſuch a Houſe to have been principally deſigned for the Maintenance of a certain Number of poor Cripples, or lame Brethren. Religion indeed was generally attached: And theſe, and other poor Brethren of other Denominations, were expected to dedicate themſelves the Remainder of their Days to the Service of the Church, and behave as Servants or Miniſters of it. And ſo it was in ſome Sort in the Primitive Church. Nay, even ſo early as the latter Part of St. *Paul*'s Time, we find that aged and deſtitute Perſons, particularly ancient poor Widows, not leſs than Sixty Years of Age, and of good Character, were to be put upon the Poor Liſt, and maintained by the Church, to the Service of which they were afterwards to apply themſelves, and were to help, what they could, in diſtributing the Church's Alms to the Poor, in attending the Sick, in inſtructing the young and ignorant, and aſſiſting at the Celebration of Baptiſm and the Euchariſt. See 1ſt *Tim.* v. 9.

Some, in Conſequence of the above Opinion, that the Church maintained the Poor, have lately propoſed to have the Poor thrown back again on it. But this is abſurd, unleſs with the Poor all the Church-Lands and Tythes were likewiſe to be reſtored. For the Church at preſent can hardly

hardly maintain her own Members. The inferior Clergy are ſo ſcantily provided for, that many of them cannot live or appear with common Decency. It is for the Good of Religion, and the Intereſt of Society, that every Pariſh Miniſter ſhould have a handſome Competency. For no Set of Men contribute more to keep up Order and Government in a State. But Poverty diſqualifies the Miniſter for theſe Ends: It depreſſes his Spirits, expoſes him to Contempt and Ridicule, and by leſſening his Authority as a Man, greatly leſſens it, as a Moraliſt and Divine.

Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in ſe,
Quàm quòd homines ridiculos facit :— JUVENAL.

The Stipends of many Churches being ſo mean, mean illiterate Perſons of courſe are placed upon them, who by their ſervile, or worſe Behaviour, diſhonour both their Religion and Profeſſion. Or if a worthy ingenious Man be forced to take up with ſuch a Place, he is ſoon in Danger of being over-run with Ruſticity and Ignorance, as his Circumſtances will neither afford him Books to improve his Knowledge, nor Time to apply to his Studies and the Duties of his Office, by Reaſon of worldly Avocations, and the Solicitude of a Maintenance. This Grievance, for I think, it is a Grievance, might eaſily be remedied, by buying in the Impropriations, (which certainly ought to go to the Church, or revert to the Land-Owners) and raiſing the Purchaſe-mo-

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ney by Queen *Anne*'s Bounty, and a Tax for one, two, or three Years on all Clergymen of ſuch a particular Income.—By diſallowing of Pluralities and Non-reſidence.—By ſinking ſome Prebends and Canonries, as they ſhall become void, and applying the Profits to the Augmentation of poor Livings, and thereby rendering the Revenues of the Church more equable and uſeful.

But it is ridiculous to talk of throwing the Poor upon the Church again, unleſs, as I ſaid, all the Church Revenues were likewiſe to be reſtored. And even if they were, which there is no Likelihood of ever ſeeing, I believe the Church would find the Burthen too great to be born, if ſhe was obliged by Law indiſcriminately to relieve all that offered. As *Henry* the VIIIth is reported to have told the Abbot of *Glaſtenbury*, upon the Abbot's refuſing the King a large Sum of Money he had aſked for, that he would burn his Kitchen about his Ears; So the Poor under ſuch a Law, I believe, would ſoon grow obſtreperous and inſolent, and threaten to pull down Churchmen's Houſes upon their Heads, if they did not give them what, and in what Manner, they pleaſed. But in Fact it is not true, that the Church maintained the Poor then. The Religious Houſes did no otherwiſe than the Religious Houſes abroad, and the hoſpitable Maſters of other Houſes did, and do now, live generouſly, keep a plentiful Table, and give the Surplus to the Poor. The Abbies, Monaſteries, *&c.* as being rich Bodies, and not

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incumbered with Wives and Children, and expenſive Families, were able to contribute largely: But could what the Poor received from them be a Sufficiency? Meat and drink were only given here; at leaſt, not commonly any Thing elſe; the Poor had ſtill Lodging, Cloathing, Firing, *&c.* to find, that is to ſay, the greater Part of the Neceſſaries of Life. Private Charities were quite needful, and were as much beſtowed then as ever. Collections were made on the Sabbath Days, and at ſeveral other Times. Poor Boxes, now fallen in a Manner into diſuſe, were kept up in the Churches, and received the ſecret Alms of many generous Benefactors. Upon a Recovery from a Fit of Sickneſs, upon returning ſafe from a Voyage, or a long Journey, upon the Birth of an Heir, upon any ſignal Succeſs or Bleſſing, the Thankful never failed to repair hither, and ſhew by their Regard to the Poor their Gratitude to God.

If the Abbies, *&c.* maintained the Poor, how came the Poor not to have been equally deſtitute in other Proteſtant Countries on the Seculariſation of them? and how came the Poor Law not to have been paſſed here in *England*, immediately on the Diſſolution, or Seculariſation, when the Poor, we muſt ſuppoſe, were moſt to ſeek for a Maintenance, and no new Reſources were as yet opened? How did they ſubſiſt the latter Part of *Henry* the VIIIth, all the Reign of *Edward* the VIth, of Queen *Mary*, and of Queen *Elizabeth*, till about a Year before her Death,

that is, near Seventy Years in the whole? We don't read of any extraordinary Sufferings of the Poor during this Time; nor of any Tumults or Risings amongst the lower Sort of People on Account of their Distress, tho' many on Account of the Alteration in Religion. But when the Poor have been greatly pinched and oppressed, they have seldom failed to let the Government know it, by their Complaints, Remonstrances, or Insurrections. How often have the People in former Times run to Arms on Account of Inclosures, and forced their Superiors to disforest the inclosed Lands, and lay them open for the Poor again? It was not therefore the Dissolution of the religious Houses that brought on the Poor Law; (It contributed to increase the Distress of the Poor, I'll allow:) But there were a great many idle, sturdy, wicked Vagabonds going about then, as now, a Terror to honest People, and a Nuisance to the Public: And for the Suppression and Prevention of these, several Laws had been passed in different Reigns, even from the Time of the wise and good King *Alfred* to the 39th of *Elizabeth*: and the Law to relieve the Poor was meant only as a further improvement or Amendment of these, and was understood to vary, and at first seemingly varied, but little from them. After all the vagabond Laws, still Poor People wandered from Place to Place, and Strollers and sturdy Baggars, and under that Denomination, many Cheats and Thieves went about. And to keep every Body at Home

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and ſuppreſs ſuch Vagrants, and alſo to take away the Pretext, that they muſt ſtarve, if they did not go about, a Law was made, that every Pariſh ſhould find Employment, and ſet to labour all thoſe of the Pariſh that ſhould be able to work, and to maintain the helpleſs and impotent who ſhould not be able. So that what may now be thought the main Part of the Act, the giving Pariſh-Penſions to the Poor, ſeems only to have been a conſequential Part; the keeping the Poor at home, and ſetting them to work having been the principal Deſign, and the Clauſe for relieving them in their reſpective Places of Habitation, or Settlement, introduced only as a Means to Silence all Complaints, and take away every Pretence for ſtrolling, and begging abroad.

Indeed, ſome new Species of Expence have aroſe ſince the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, which have greatly contributed to increaſe the Wants and Diſtreſſes of the Poor: As Firſt, the Cuſtom of *ſmoaking* and *chewing Tobacco*. This, 'tis well known, is now, and has been for many Years extremely common among the Poor. But the Plant, I believe, was hardly heard of in *England*, till Sir *Waltar Raleigh* introduced it, who lived under Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James* the Firſt. The Expence to many poor labouring People only on this Article is very conſiderable. I believe ſome lay out almoſt as much in Tobacco, as in Bread; and declare, they can as ill go without the firſt as the laſt. To this unneceſſary idle Expence muſt be added another of a

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ſimilar Nature, ariſing from the like Miſapplication of the ſame Plant, that of *Snuff-taking*. This for ſome Time was practiſed chiefly by the better Sort; but as Inferiors are always apt to imitate the Ways of their Superiors, tis now become general among the loweſt Claſs; and you ſhall ſcarce meet with a common Handicrafts-Man, or a Servant Maid, but what is more or leſs addicted to this Habit. The Cuſtom is become ſo prevalent and notorious, eſpecially amongſt the Females, that in Advertiſements for Servant-Maids, we ſee it particularly mentioned very often, that no Snuff-takers will be accepted. To one that has, or gets but little, a little is much. And tho' theſe Things are bought by ſmall Quantities, and the Money is laid out by Pence and Half-pence, and ſeemingly is not felt, yet if an Account was kept of the Sum thus yearly expended, it would appear no ſmall Matter; it would appear much too great for the Perſon that expends it.

But it is further obſerveable, that, beſides the Expence, the habitual Uſe, or rather Abuſe of Tobacco and Snuff is detrimental to Health. Conſtant Obſervation and Experience but too evidently prove, that theſe Practices pall the Appetite, impair Digeſtion, taint the Blood and Juices, and render them leſs fit for Nutrition. Whence follow, in a greater or leſs Degree according to Circumſtances, a pale ſallow Caſt of the Complexion, Loſs of Fleſh, Relax-

ation,

ation, and Decline of Strength, Vigour and Spirits.

Another new Species of Expence crept in of late Years among the lower Sort is *Tea-Drinking*. It has been aſſerted many times in Print, and is indiſputably known to be true, that ſeveral poor Perſons, who receive Charity, have their Tea once, if not twice a Day. In Sea-port Towns, and moſt Places on the Coaſt, where, by clandeſtine Means, Tea is afforded cheaper, it is the ordinary Breakfaſt of the very meaneſt of the Inhabitants. But for poor Wretches, almoſt deſtitue of the common Neceſſaries of Life, to run daily into ſuch idle Extravagances, is certainly a very ridiculous Piece of Management: For the Expence of the whole Apparatus of Tea, Sugar, Cream, Bread and Butter, *&c.* muſt be near treble to that of Milk or Broth, or any other common wholeſome Breakfaſt. Beſides, Experience fully evinces, that Tea is prejudicial to the Health, as well as to the Pocket of the Poor. Tho' a moderate Uſe of it, as a Diluent of the Food and Blood, may agree well enough with Perſons that have good Conſtitutions and *live well*, yet in Concurrence with a low, coarſe, vegetable Diet, the chief Food of poor People, its Effects are very miſchievous; as it relaxes and weakens the Solids, impoveriſhes the Blood, and enervates the Strength and Vigor of the Body. There is alſo a conſiderable Loſs of Time attends this ſilly Habit, in preparing and ſipping their Tea; a Circumſtance of no ſmall Moment to thoſe who

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are to live by their Labour. It is now uſual with many Female Servants to inſiſt on Tea in their Agreement, and to refuſe ſerving where this is not allowed. And when from Servants they go to be poor Men's Wives, we may naturally ſuppoſe they carry the ſame expenſive Appetites and Habits with them, which being propagated by Example to the Offſpring, the Evil becomes ſtill more epidemical.

Another Article of Expence that in theſe later Times hath made its Way among the Poor or lower Sort, is the wearing of *Ribbands*, *Ruffles*, *Silks*, and other ſlight foreign Things, that come dear, and do but little Service. Why might not *Engliſh* Woollens or Worſteds, worked up ſo fine as they are to be met with, be ſufficient to ſerve for the Apparel of all Servants, and others of a certain Degree, as they did heretofore? Have not Extravagances in theſe Articles contributed greatly to make Labour and Servants Wages run ſo high? And yet the Servants and Labourers are not a Jot the better or richer. A ſumptuary Law would be of Service to the Poor themſelves, as well as to the Nation in general. For notwithſtanding the high Price of Wages and Labour to what it was formerly, the Poor ſeem to be as needy and bare and wretched as ever.

The laſt new Species of unneceſſary Expence which I ſhall mention is *Dram-drinking*; which perhaps is worſe than all the reſt together, bad as they are ſingly. The Diſtillation of Spirituous

Liquors

Liquors was formerly a very Trifle in this Kingdom, and chiefly confined to the Druggiſts and Apothecaries Shops. But of late Years it has been immenſly great, and the Conſumption in Proportion. I have been aſſured by an Officer in the Exciſe, that there was a greater Quantity or more Hogſheads of Spirituous Liquors drank in *Plymouth* in the late War, than of Beer, Ale and Cyder together. How far Tea-drinking, by relaxing the Nerves and ſinking the Strength and Spirits, may have contributed to Dram-drinking, which affords a ſhort deluſory Relief for thoſe Depreſſions, I ſhall not take upon me to determine. If we look abroad into the World and view the Havock and Deſtruction which Dram-drinking makes among the common People, amongſt whom it chiefly prevails, and conſider the Miſeries and Calamities which it brings, by that means, upon the Nation in general, every thinking Well-Wiſher to his Country muſt be greatly ſhocked at the Sight of ſuch a Scene. This monſtrous abuſe of Spirituous Liquors has moſt pernicious Effects; it conſumes the Gains and Subſiſtence of the People, and reduces them to Poverty and Want; deſtroys their Health and Strength, and makes them both unwilling and unable to Work, and cuts off the thread of Life before they have lived out half their Days; it intoxicates the Mind, inflames the Paſſions, puts Men off their Guard, and expoſes them to all manner of Vice and Corruption. From whence follow a great Loſs of uſeful Hands for

are to live by their Labour. It is now uſual with many Female Servants to inſiſt on Tea in their Agreement, and to refuſe ſerving where this is not allowed. And when from Servants they go to be poor Men's Wives, we may naturally ſuppoſe they carry the ſame expenſive Appetites and Habits with them, which being propagated by Example to the Offſpring, the Evil becomes ſtill more epidemical.

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The laſt new Species of unneceſſary Expence which I ſhall mention is *Dram-drinking*; which perhaps is worſe than all the reſt together, bad as they are ſingly. The Diſtillation of Spirituous

Liquors

Liquors was formerly a very Trifle in this Kingdom, and chiefly confined to the Druggiſts and Apothecaries Shops. But of late Years it has been immenſly great, and the Conſumption in Proportion. I have been aſſured by an Officer in the Exciſe, that there was a greater Quantity or more Hogſheads of Spirituous Liquors drank in *Plymouth* in the late War, than of Beer, Ale and Cyder together. How far Tea-drinking, by relaxing the Nerves and ſinking the Strength and Spirits, may have contributed to Dram-drinking, which affords a ſhort deluſory Relief for thoſe Depreſſions, I ſhall not take upon me to determine. If we look abroad into the World and view the Havock and Deſtruction which Dram-drinking makes among the common People, amongſt whom it chiefly prevails, and conſider the Miſeries and Calamities which it brings, by that means, upon the Nation in general, every thinking Well-Wiſher to his Country muſt be greatly ſhocked at the Sight of ſuch a Scene. This monſtrous abuſe of Spirituous Liquors has moſt pernicious Effects; it conſumes the Gains and Subſiſtence of the People, and reduces them to Poverty and Want; deſtroys their Health and Strength, and makes them both unwilling and unable to Work, and cuts off the thread of Life before they have lived out half their Days; it intoxicates the Mind, inflames the Paſſions, puts Men off their Guard, and expoſes them to all manner of Vice and Corruption. From whence follow a great Loſs of uſeful Hands for

our Manufactures and Agriculture; extravagant high Wages and great Expence of Labour; an Obſtruction and Diminution of our Trade both at Home and Abroad; a general Corruption of Manners; a numerous burthenſome wicked Poor; Frauds, Theſts and Robberies, the natural Conſequences of Licentiouſneſs and Poverty; a Degeneracy of the *Britiſh* Nation from the manly Size, Strength, and Courage of our Anceſtors; inſtead of a ſtout, vigorous, brave-ſpirited People, for which this Nation has always been diſtinguiſhed, we can expect to ſee nothing but a poor, diminutive, mean-ſpirited degenerate Race, a Diſhonour to their Country. It is to be hoped, the late Law will put ſome Stop to this deſtructive Practice, or ſome more effectual one will be enacted.

Theſe then are new Articles of Expence, unknown to this Nation in former Times. A Law to relieve People brought to Want by theſe Extravagances is unreaſonable and impolitic, and in Time muſt prove fatal to the Nation. The Number of the Receivers will become greater than that of the Contributors, and theſe muſt fall with the reſt, and all come to Poverty, Miſery, and Confuſion.

However, tho' ſo much may be ſaid againſt the Law for a Taxation to the Poor, I am not for having it repealed, but only amended. Tho' I'm ſatisfied, it were better even for the Poor themſelves, as well as the Nation in general, that the Law had never been paſſed, yet as the

Poor

Poor have been ſo long in Poſſeſſion of it, they may think they have a kind of Right to it, and it might ſeem Cruelty now to reſume what at firſt might have been unexceptionably withheld. Beſides, Relief having ſo long paſſed thro' this Conveyance, might not ſoon find its Way thro' other Channels.

There is only one good Argument, that I know of, in Favour of a Poor Tax, and that is, it forces open the Purſes of the Covetous-Rich. The generous and worthier Part of Mankind, it is ſaid, bear all the Burthen in voluntary Charities. But the Poor-Law obliges the Hard-hearted and Cruel to be merciful, and contribute to the Relief of their aged, helpleſs, diſtreſſed Neighbours.

But Query, whether the Evils don't a great deal more than counter-balance this ſingle Benefit? Beſides, what a Fallacy is there in this Argument? 'The generous and worthier Part of Mankind bear all the Burthen in voluntary Charities;' go away with all the Pleaſure, we ſhould rather ſay, the Pleaſure of doing a kind Thing now, and the Glory and Reward of it hereafter. If a Man hath not the Heart to part with any thing voluntarily, let him keep his Riches as a Curſe to him, and let him never taſte the Happineſs the Beneficent enjoy, when they cheer the Sorrows, and aſſwage the Grief, when they relieve the Wants, and gladden the Hearts of their Fellow Creatures around them. As the Apoſtle ſays, 'He would 'rather ſpeak five Words with his Underſtanding,

'than ten Thouſand in an unknown Tongue:' So there is more Merit in five Mites of voluntary Charity, than in ten Thouſand of forced.

The People of *England* want leſs perhaps to be forced, than any other Nation under the Sun. They are naturally a kind, a compaſſionate, a generous People, and notwithſtanding the vaſt Sums exacted yearly by Law, and notwithſtanding compulſory Methods tend to weaken, and have, I doubt not, much weakened the Principle of Charity, yet a noble Spirit has ſhewn itſelf, and ſtill doth ſhew itſelf, tho' not ſo much as heretofore, on all proper urgent Occaſions. Witneſs the many grand Structures, and large Endowments for Charity-Schools, for Hoſpitals, Infirmaries, *&c.* which we have ſeen erected and eſtabliſhed only within a Century paſt. Witneſs the handſome Subſcriptions and generous Collections, that even now are commonly made, when the Call is really preſſing, and the Object truly deſerving. Witneſs the daily Alms, the Lame, the Blind, the Beggar of every Sort, commonly meets with, on the Road, in the Streets, or at our Doors, tho' we know ſuch Alms to be wrong, as giving Encouragement to Strollers, tho' we know that no Poor can juſtifiably go about, and tho' we every now and then find, to our Coſt, ſuch Beggars to be Impoſtors and Thieves, and by ſuffering them to come about our Houſes, give them an Opportunity of ſpying out the weakeſt Parts, and, as Occaſion offers, of rifling them, and by permitting them to approach our

Perſons,

Perſons, put it in their Power, eſpecially on the Highway, of aſſaulting and robbing us.

Many Perſons, upon hearing of the great Riches and Revenues of Churches, Monaſteries, *&c.* have wondered how ſo much ever came to be given in Charity, and have admired the Bounty of former Ages. Indeed, it being the general Belief of the *Roman* Catholics that Charity doth abſolutely cover a Multitude of Sins, it's no Wonder, that Charity ſhould greatly prevail under ſuch a Perſuaſion. Beſides, in *England* forced Charity, as hath been obſerved, has gradually checked and thrown a Damp upon voluntary. And yet ſtill we may almoſt ſay, the ſame Charitable Spirit hath ſhewed itſelf, only changing Objects, ſince the Diſſolution of Monaſteries, as before, and that Charity-Schools and Hoſpitals have gone away with Legacies and Benefactions, much as the Abbies and Priories and Religious Houſes did formerly. The Wealth of thoſe Houſes, we are not to think, was ſpeedily accumulated: It was the Produce of the Nation's Charity for more than five Hundred Years. But we in leſs than two Hundred have ſeen moſt magnificent Fabricks erected, and noble Foundations eſtabliſhed, not only in, and about the Metropolis, but in moſt Counties of the Kingdom. And if it had not been for a new Statute of Mortmain paſſed a few Years ago, our Charities in Time might have proved our Grievance, and a Diſſolution of them have become as neceſſary, as of Religious Eſtabliſhments heretofore.

For

For no doubt, it's the Intereſt of every Nation, that the Wealth ſhould be pretty equally diſperſed, and that no over-grown Bodies, eſpecially Bodies that never die, ſhould engroſs too great a Property. This Turn, as I mentioned before, our Charity hath taken for ſome few Years paſt. But, to uſe the Words of Lord *Bacon* in his Eſſay on Riches, 'Glorious Gifts 'and Foundations, are like Sacrifices without 'Salt, and but the painted Sepulchres of Alms, 'which ſoon will putrify, and corrupt inwardly. 'Therefore meaſure not thine Advancements by 'Quantity, but frame them by Meaſure. And 'defer not Charities till Death. For certainly 'if a Man weigh it rightly, He that doth ſo, is 'rather liberal of another Man's than of his 'own.'

However it muſt be confeſſed, that at preſent, the Love of many waxeth cold. As Poor Rates have increaſed, private Alms and Gifts have leſſened, and tho' the preſent Times afford ſufficient Inſtances of occaſional Benfactions, and particular Donations, a general Beneficence, and conſtant Flow of Charity upon all poor Objects that come in our way, I'm afraid, is far from being our modern Character.

As ſome of the Evils of the Compulſory Law to maintain the Poor, appeared upon the firſt Eſtabliſhment, and others have ſince aroſe, and the Expence thereof has been continually increaſing, and very likely will ſtill increaſe, tho' the Burthen is in many Places already become

almoſt

almoſt intolerable, ſome Alteration or Amendment ſeems abſolutely neceſſary: What Method the Parliament intend to take, is not as yet made public. Poor Houſes or Hoſpitals are generally talked of. And they ſeem indeed the likelieſt Means to produce the End we aim at, namely the Maintenance of the Impotent, the Employment of the Able, and the Confinement and Correction of the idle vagrant Poor. The *Dutch* have been reckoned remarkable for their Frugality, Oeconomy, and good Management, and particularly for their good Management of the Poor, and the Suppreſſion of Vagrants and Beggars. And the Way, as hath been obſerved before, they have ſo well ſucceeded in, is chiefly by Hoſpitals. Suppoſe then, a Poor-Houſe, Work-Houſe, Hoſpital, or whatever you will pleaſe to call it, was erected in ſome convenient Place near the Middle of every Hundred. It ſhould conſiſt of three Parts, one for the Impotent, and the able and honeſt induſtrious Poor; one for the Sick; and one for the Confinement, Labour, and Correction of Vagrants, Idlers, and Sturdy Beggars. It ſhould be ſtrong and plain: Grandeur here is abſurd. For ſurely Palaces are not proper for Paupers. The Buildings need not be of large Extent: For I'm convinced the Inhabitants would not be very numerous. That Part intended for a Houſe of Correction ſhould be particularly ſtrong. If poſſible, the Building ſhould be erected near ſome River, and where there is a good deal of waſte Ground. The River might

might ſerve for Mills of various Sorts, and for many Purpoſes in Trade and Manufactures, as well as culinary Uſes: And the waſte Ground might be taken in and improved, and ſerve for the Production of Roots and Vegetables, Corn, *&c.* for Rope-Yards, for bleaching and drying Hemp, Flax, Yarn, Wool, *&c.* for many other Purpoſes, which it is not neceſſary here to enumerate. If poſſible alſo it ſhould be near ſome Church, that the Poor might have the Benefit of Divine Service every *Sunday*, and other Days of Public Worſhip.

All Perſons that begged or aſked for Relief, ſhould directly be ſent to this Houſe, and be immediately admitted, on an Order ſigned by the Miniſter and Overſeers for the Time being, or by a Majority of the Churchwardens and Overſeers of every Pariſh. No Money, but what paſſed thro' this Houſe, ſhould be charged by the Overſeers. Here the Poor ſhould be well taken care off, and ſupplied with wholeſome Diet, Cloathing, and Lodging: Materials ſhould be provided for the Employment of all thoſe that ſhould be able to work, as Hemp, Flax, Wool, Leather, Yarn, both Linen and Woollen, Iron, Wood, &c. and likewiſe proper Implements and working Tools, as ſpinning Wheels, Cards, Turns, knitting and other Needles, Looms, Shovels, Axes, Hammers, Saws for Stone and Timber, and perhaps ſome ſort of Mills, where a Stream could be had, as Corn, Fulling, Paper Mills, &c. Here ſeveral Sorts of Buſineſs,

and

and ſome ſmall Manufactures might be carried on, as Spinning, Weaving, Stocking and Net-knitting, Sawing, Rope-making, Wool-combing, particularly in the Weſt of *England*, where the Woollen Trade is conſiderable, Flax-dreſſing, particularly in the *North*, where a good deal of Hemp and Flax is grown. The Manufacture of Pin-making would employ a Number of Poor. A ſkilful Manager would find Work of ſome Kind or other for every one. The Lame of Foot, might uſe their Hands for many good Purpoſes. The Blind might turn a Windlas, a Wheel, or Grinding-Stone. Even Children might ſoon be brought to do many Things, to knit Stockings or Nets, to wind Thread or Yarn, and aſſiſt the Weavers, *&c.* The Aged, if they could do nothing elſe, might overlook, inſtruct, and direct others, in thoſe ſeveral Branches of Buſineſs they were ſkilled in. But none ſhould be hardly dealt with, or forced beyond their Age or Strength. For Encouragement, there might be ſeveral little Poſts in the Houſe, as Butler, Cook, Gardener, Porter, Houſe-keeper, Chamber-Maid, *&c.* and theſe given away to thoſe that were moſt induſtrious, and behaved beſt. It might be ordered, that the Poor ſhould in a manner do all the Buſineſs of the Houſe, and work for, and attend one another, without the Expence of Taylors, Shoemakers, Sempſters, Spinſters, Weavers, Nurſes, *&c.* A Gentleman bred a regular Apothecary and Sur-

geon, might be contracted with by the Year to attend the Sick.

After the Buildings were erected, and Furniture, and Materials for Work, and working Implements provided, I reckon the Labour of the Houſe would go a good way towards maintaining it. The Eating, *&c.* of the Houſe might be upon much the ſame Plan, as our County-Hoſpitals. The Cloathing ſhould be an Uniform. The Charge of Building, and all other Expences, ſhould be borne by the ſeveral Pariſhes of the Hundred, each Pariſh paying a Proportion, according to a Medium of what they had paid to the Poor for four Years laſt paſt. The Money ſhould be aſſeſſed, and collected, in the ſame Manner as at preſent.

The two Overſeers, and Miniſter of the Pariſh, if he thought proper to join with them, ſhould be the acting Officers for a Year, and ſhould have the Management of the ordinary Buſineſs of the Hoſpital. And each Pariſh in the Hundred ſhould take the Management by Rotation, beginning Alphabetically according to the initial Letters of each Pariſh. No Perſon ſhould be capable of being choſen Overſeer, that had not 40 *l.* a Year Leaſehold, or 20 *l.* a Year Land. The Accounts of the two acting Officers ſhould be audited, and paſſed every Quarter, at a General Meeting of all the Overſeers of the Hundred, and the Miniſters of the reſpective Pariſhes, together with the Juſtices of the Hundred: And the Determination of a Majority

Majority of thoſe that attended, ſhould be final. In caſe of Fraud, or wilful Miſmanagement in the acting Officers, the Majority ſhould have a Power to levy by Diſtreſs, and Sale of the Offender's Goods, ſo much Money as would make Satisfaction. Or if any particular Pariſh thought itſelf aggrieved, there might be Liberty of appealing to the next General Quarter Seſſions for the County, or to a Committee of three or five of the Managers of the Houſe, choſen by Ballot. The Charge of Appeal ſhould be borne by the Pariſh appealing, unleſs the Perſons or Pariſh appealed againſt ſhould be caſt, in which Caſe they ſhould pay the Coſt. Market Towns I think ſhould have an Hoſpital of their own, and not be admitted as Members of the united Hundred; Becauſe their Numbers might cauſe a good deal of Trouble to the Houſe, and, upon a Decay of Trade, Accidents of Fire, Sickneſs, *&c.* which Towns are moſt liable to, might bring an extraordinary Charge of Poor, and their Payments would not be in Proportion to their Burthen. Beſides, a Perſonal Eſtate, and Stock in Trade, which are charged in Towns, being uncertain fluctuating Things, there might ſometimes be a Deficiency, oftentimes a Difficulty in getting in their Quota.

If any idle, diſorderly Perſons, ſhould be found begging, or loitering about, in twelve Hours after Notice given to depart, they ſhould be taken up by the Miniſter, Overſeers, or Conſtable, and ſent to the Houſe of Correction, and

there be kept to hard Labour for one Week, and then diſmiſſed with a Paſs to the next Hundred, *&c.* on a Promiſe to behave well, and forthwith to repair to their reſpective Places of Settlement. And if found a ſecond Time ſo loitering or begging in the ſame, or any other Pariſh of the Hundred, then to be taken up, and whipped at the Houſe, and confined to hard Labour for one Month. And upon a third Offence, to be confined, as above, till the Quarter Seſſions of the Peace, and on Proof of any ſuch Perſon's being an incorrigible Rogue, *&c.* to be tranſported, made a Slave of, or whatever the Quarter Seſſions ſhall think proper. Nay, the Officers of every Pariſh ſhould have a Power to take up any idle, diſorderly, drunken, phrophane, abuſive Perſons of their own reſpective Pariſhes, eſpecially ſuch Perſons as ſhould frequent Tippling Houſes, neglect to provide for their Families, refuſe to labour, and had no honeſt apparent Way of getting a Livelihood, and ſend them to the Work-Houſe, and there keep them to hard Labour a longer, or ſhorter Time, according to the Degree of the Offence, and Appearance of Reformation.

If any Poor in the Houſes, that were able to work, refuſed, * St. *Paul* ſhews us the right and ready Puniſhment, commanding, *That if any would not work, neither ſhould He eat.* In Caſe of Theft, Quarrelling, Abuſiveneſs, Drun-

* 2 Theſſal. Chap. iii. Ver. 10.

kenneſs,

kenneſs, Contumacy, lying out of the Houſe without Leave, ſelling their Cloaths, &c. the acting Officers, after proper Admonition for the firſt Offence, ſhould have a Power to put the Offenders into the Houſe of Correction, and there keep them to hard Labour and on hard Fare for a Space of Time ſuitable to the Nature and Degree of the ſecond Offence, with the Addition of proper Chaſtiſement, if other Means would not do, upon a Repetition of Miſbehaviour.

The Reaſon I would leave the Management of the Houſe ſo much to the reſpective Pariſh Officers is, becauſe they, as the Repreſentatives of the Pariſhes, are the Perſons properly concerned, are particularly intereſted in the Affair, and conſequently it being their own Buſineſs, will be moſt likely to mind and do it beſt. Juſtices have ſo much other Buſineſs upon their Hands, that it could not be expected they would be able or willing to give the neceſſary Attention and Attendance. So that to leave the Execution of the Scheme to them, I'm afraid, would bring it to nothing. The Charge would not at all be too great to be committed to the Overſeers, as they would be obliged by Law to be Men of conſiderable Property, and the ſeveral Pariſhes would take Care, for their own Sakes, in a Truſt of ſo much Importance, to chuſe always Men of ſome Credit, Underſtanding, Honeſty, and Virtue. The Act of Queen *Elizabeth* requires the Overſeers to be two ſubſtantial Houſholders: And perhaps it would

would be limiting their Qualification too low, to fix it as I have done, at 40*l.* a Year Leaſe, and 20*l.* Land. They ſhould, as much as poſſible, be Perſons of Authority and Character: And I hope, and doubt not, but we ſhould ſee the beſt Gentlemen of the Pariſhes moſt commonly elected. The acting Officers ſhould have a Matron and a Deputy-Manager or Clerk conſtantly reſident in the Houſe, to act under them.

A Poor-Houſe, or Hoſpital upon ſome ſuch Plan, as is here mentioned, would in a ſhort Time be found to be of vaſt Service. It muſt be left to Perſons of wiſer Heads, and ſuperior Stations, to draw out a full and regular Plan. I only preſume to give ſome rude imperfect Sketches.

Some of the Advantages, that would ariſe from ſuch a Regulation, are theſe.

Firſt, It would leſſen the Number of the Poor. For to be ſent to the Poor-Houſe, however well they might be taken Care of there, would look like a Sort of Exile, and be deem'd ſome Hardſhip and Puniſhment: And many that now live lazily on Monthly Pay, in order to avoid going thither, would be content to labour, and fare harder, and make a Shift to ſubſiſt. For they would conſider, they muſt work at the Hoſpital: And therefore that it's better to live among their Friends and work at home. I verily believe, that one half of the preſent Poor, upon the Alternative, either to go to the Hoſpital, or be ſtruck off the Pariſh Poor-Liſt,

would

would chuſe the laſt. And in this Caſe no Injury or Hardſhip is done. For if a Perſon will not take Charity in the Way it is offered Him, He may be ſuppoſed to be able, and ought indeed to go without it.

The Hoſpital would chiefly conſiſt of Children not come to work, of the Aged, who are paſt Work, and of the Blind and Lame and Sick, that is of the Impotent, who are thought incapable of Work. The Number of the Firſt and Second would not be great, if the Law was ſtrictly enforced, that in Caſe of Ability, all Parents ſhould maintain their Children, and Children their Parents. And the Number of the Third would ſtill be leſs again, as natural and accidental Incapacities happen ſo ſeldom.

Secondly, It would not only leſſen the Number of Poor, but of Courſe it would increaſe Labour, Care, and Induſtry. For if ſome, that now receive Pay, would endeavour to ſubſiſt themſelves by their Work, rather than go to the Hoſpital; they muſt certainly be more careful and work harder. And the ſame Diſlike of going to the Hoſpital that makes them induſtrious now, would put them, very likely, upon making ſome little Proviſion for Futurity, that they might not afterwards be ſent thither upon the firſt Failure of their Labour. Thus Care and Induſtry would increaſe among the Poor out of the Hoſpital, and great Advantage accrue thereby to the Public. And as for the Hoſpitallers themſelves, very few of them, except the Sick,

and

and thoſe diſordered in their Senſes, would be found to be abſolutely incapable of Labour. Diſperſed and neglected as they are at preſent in their ſeveral Pariſhes, they can get little or nothing. They muſt ſtarve, if they are not relieved. They have neither the Inſtruments nor Materials for Work, nor any Labour ſuited to their Capacity and Strength. But in the Hoſpital proper Employment might be found for all, and Buſineſs of one kind or other adapted to every one's Condition. You give ſuch or ſuch a Pauper ſo much Pay *per* Month. He lives but from Hand to Mouth. He continually ſpends it as he receives it. He does not put himſelf on any Buſineſs; he has none, if he would, to put himſelf upon. You muſt continue his Allowance from Year to Year, or you ſtarve him. But in the Hoſpital, where there would be a Stock, and Materials for moſt Kinds of Work, all ſuch Paupers might in part, if not wholly be brought to earn their Bread. And conſider what vaſt Benefit would redound to the ſeveral Pariſhes, and conſequently to the Nation in general, from ſuch an Increaſe of Induſtry and Labour. For

Thirdly, An Increaſe of Labour, and a Diminution of the Number of Poor, would of Courſe produce a Diminution of the Expence. Not only becauſe there wold be fewer Poor to be maintained, but becauſe thoſe that were to be maintained, would moſt of them by their Labour contribute to their Maintenance, and thoſe that were entirely to be maintained, would be

maintained

maintained cheaper in a Body in the Hoſpital, than they can ſeparately, as at preſent, in their reſpective Pariſhes. But beſide this, what would cauſe a vaſt Saving, many of thoſe incidental Charges beforementioned, would by ſuch a Regulation be avoided. It would be no great Matter, which Pariſh in the Hundred, ſuch or ſuch a Pauper belonged to, when the whole Hundred, with Regard to the Poor, might be conſidered as one Pariſh. Diſputes about Settlements, and Orders, and Appeals would in a great Meaſure be at an End. For theſe Diſputes commonly ariſe between neighbouring Pariſhes; Servants, poor Cottagers, and ſuch like Emigrants, that generally give Cauſe for the Diſputes, ſeldom going further than from one Pariſh to another in the Hundred. The Ceſſation of ſuch Diſputes, would ſave the Juſtices a great deal of Trouble, and produce Harmony and good Neighbourhood in the Nation, and prevent many Quarrels and Animoſities between contiguous Pariſhes and Gentlemen, that firſt ariſe on Account of Differences about the Poor.

It might not be amiſs, if theſe Hoſpitals were empowered to receive all diſtreſſed Travellers; eſpecially ſuch as ſhould come with lawful Paſſes, and entertain and lodge them for one Night, whereby the really Diſtreſſed would find great Comfort, the ſeveral Pariſhes would be excuſed that Burthen, and no Perſons, under the Pretence of Shipwrack, or otherwiſe, could have

any Plea for going about from Houſe to Houſe to aſk for Alms and Lodging.

Fourthly, Some ſuch Regulation, as is here offered, would in all likelihood ſuppreſs a great Number of Strollers and Vagrants, if it did not entirely put an End to them. For here is a Remedy cheap and eaſy at Hand. The ſeveral Officers having nothing to do, but to take up, and ſend to the Work-Houſe, (which would ſcarce be a Shilling Expence) all Loiterers, Idlers, and Sturdy Beggars, that ſhould be found wandering in their reſpective Pariſhes, and ſhould refuſe to depart, upon proper Notice. Pariſhes would find it ſo much their Intereſt, and at the ſame Time ſo eaſy to do this, that I make no Doubt we ſhould ſee it effectually executed. But at preſent Vagrants may lurk about, or wander where they pleaſe, without any Body's moleſting or taking Notice of them. If any Perſons were to go to take them up, perhaps they would be called only Buſy-Bodies. And before they can take them up, they muſt go to a Juſtice of Peace, and have a Warrant. The Juſtice perhaps lives ſeveral Miles off, and may not be found at Home the firſt Time of going. Here is ſome Time and Labour loſt. Or if he be at Home, there's the Expence of the Warrant, Guard, and Loſs of another Day to bring the Delinquent before him: Who perhaps, hearing ſomething of the Affair, in the mean Time ſlips away. But ſuppoſe him taken up, and carried before a Juſtice,

tice, it may be doubtful whether Reaſons will appear to the Juſtice ſufficient to commit the Man to Bridewell, conſidering what plauſible Stories ſuch Fellows have always ready, and conſidering that there are ſeldom wanting ſome Pettifoggers to bring an Action, even in Behalf of a ſuſpected Rogue, in caſe of any Irregularity in the Proceedings againſt him. However, ſuppoſe an Order made to commit him to the Houſe of Correction, there muſt be the Expence of a Man and Horſes, perhaps two or three Days, to carry him thither, if he happens to be taken up at a diſtant Part of the County. So that the Trouble and Charge is too great to expect that the generallity of People will offer to put the Law in Execution. And, what is a further Diſcouragement, after the Vagrant, or lewd Woman, or whoever it be, are brought to the County-Houſe of Correction, there's ſeldom any Puniſhment there for them, never, I believe, any Change, or Reformation made upon them. But after continuing there a certain Time, they are let looſe again, improved only in Impudence and Wickedneſs, and directly go perhaps and brave their Proſecutors at their own Doors, and threaten to be revenged of them, to ſhoot or knock them on the Head, to poiſon their Water, kill their Cattle, or ſet fire to their Buildings. So that the intimidated Proſecutor is only more plagued and provoked;—ſees all his good Efforts in a Manner eluded;—and heartily wiſhes he had ſat ſtill, and never meddled with

the Delinquent at all. The preſent Houſe of Correction-Puniſhment is ſo difficult to be come at, and ſo little Good is now to be expected from it, that if we muſt have no other, give us back again, I ſay, that antiquated eaſy parochial Puniſhment of the Stocks, to which the Inſtitution of Bridewels ſucceeded.

But the Regulation mentioned above, being ſo eaſy and practicable, would greatly tend to the Suppreſſion of Strollers; and I need not mention how great Service this would be to the Community. The Suppreſſion of Vagabonds would ſtop Wickedneſs in the Bud; and by preventing Men from falling into an *idle* Courſe of Life, we ſhould generally ſecure them from falling into a *vitious* Courſe. The Deſire of living in Credit and Reputation among their Neighbours, or the Fear of the Odium of a contrary Character, is a great Reſtraint upon the Maſs of the People againſt Immorality and Vice: But Wanderers and Vagabonds, having no ſettled Reſidence or Neighbourhood, are Strangers to every Body, and conſequently are free from this Reſtraint. Moſt Pick-pockets, Houſe-breakers, Street-robbers, and Foot-pads have once been idle Vagrants. And ſuch being but little influenced by Shame or Conſcience, and having no honeſt Means of getting a Livelihood, are always ripe for any wicked Enterprizes: And when urged either by the Preſſures of Neceſſity and Want, or the Solicitations of an inordinate Appetite, ſtick at no

Crimes

Crimes to ſatisfy them. You may hang, or tranſport, or cut off a Number of Felons at this Sitting, but, like Hidra's Heads, there will more ſpring up by the next, and ever will do ſo, as long as idle Vagrants, who continually furniſh a freſh Supply, are ſuffered to go as they do, unmoleſted.

Fifthly, This Manner of taking up all Strollers, and ſending them to the Hundred-Workhouſe, would not only be of great Benefit to all honeſt People, and put a Stop to the preſent audacious Crimes of Robbery and Violence, but be an Advantage likewiſe to Strollers themſelves. It would keep them very likely from the Gallows, from a ſhameful and untimely End. It is their Misfortune at preſent, that they are in ſome Meaſure obliged to wander and ſtroll about, to pick and ſteal, urged on as they are with Hunger and Want, and not knowing otherwiſe how to get a Piece of Bread. But the Workhouſe would find them Employment, and afford them a Maintenance. And when once put into ſuch a Situation, they would very probably in Time come to like it, and be pleaſed with it, and be ſorry and aſhamed of their former irregular Courſe of Life, and think it a Happineſs they were forced to leave it. Thus the Vagrants themſelves would be the better for ſuch a Regulation, and inſtead of continuing Rogues and Vagabonds, and preying upon other Men's Lives, and Labours, and Properties, they would be brought to earn their own Bread, would add the Benefit of their Labour

bour to the Public, and become uſeful Members of Society.

Sixthly, As ſuch a Regulation would in all Probability ſuppreſs a great Number of the preſent Vagrants, ſo would it very much leſſen the future Growth and Produce of them; by taking Care of poor People's Children, and bringing them up in Induſtry, Honeſty, and Virtue. As many Children, legitimate and illegitimate, would no doubt be ſent hither; ſo here they would be well looked after, be taught Reading, Writing, and early inſtructed in the Principles of Religion. At the ſame Time they would be brought up to labour and Buſineſs, as ſoon as they ſhould become capable of any. The Forenoons might be allotted to their Schooling, and the Afternoons to Employment of one kind or other, which would ſerve for Play and Exerciſe, and which ought to be more practiſed in all our Charity-Schools. Theſe Children, when ſeven Years old, or upwards, would no longer be any Trouble to the Houſe, but might be Bound out Apprentices to Farmers, Handicrafts-men, Maſters of Ships, &c. and would be trained up in a regular Way of Life, and become moſt uſeful Hands to the Public. Whereas at preſent, many poor People ruin their Children by keeping them at home, and bringing them up in Idleneſs, Beggary, and Rags. It is a Pity, and a Shame, to ſee ſuch young Things half naked plying at a Gate on the Road, and commencing Beggars from their Infancy, running after and

purſuing

purſuing you till you are forced by mere Importunity at laſt to throw them ſomething. What can we expect ſuch unhappy Creatures will prove in future Life? What but Idlers and Vagabonds, and by Degrees Pilferers, Pick-pockets, Thieves, and Robbers. Perſons that have been honeſtly and regularly brought up, and that have been uſed to get their Livelihood by Labour and Induſtry, have much Shame and Difficulty to get over, before they can bring themſelves to beg. But ſuch Children are initiated in the Art from their Cradle: Begging is almoſt natural to them, and they make no more Shame or Difficulty of going about it, than others do to go about their reſpective Trades and Occupations. From this bad Soil, or rather bad Culture, I doubt not, a conſiderable Part of the yearly Crop of unhappy Felons has grown, and will ſtill grow up, if Recourſe is not had to better Methods of Cultivation and Management. In ſhort, I believe, a Law upon ſome ſuch Plan as is here mentioned, would be of univerſal Service to the Nation: It would eaſe the Expences of the Rich, and fully provide for the Neceſſities of the Poor: It would give a right Turn and Spirit to Charity, and make it flow cheerfully both in public and private: It would fill the truly Hungry, the honeſt, the induſtrious, the unfortunate Hungry, with good Things; and the Idle and Worthleſs it would ſend empty away: It would ſee that the Childrens Bread ſhould not be taken and caſt unto Dogs:

Dogs: It would throw off the Burthen of the falſe, the pretended Poor, that it might relieve thoſe that are Poor indeed: It would cauſe a great Diminution of Beggars and Strollers for the preſent, and hinder in a good Meaſure the Growth of them for the future: It would cruſh the Cockatrice in the Egg; and, what all Law-givers ſhould chiefly aim at, it would prevent the Commiſſion of many Crimes, as well as puniſh them when committed: It would put an End to many Quarrels, Animoſities, and Law Suits among neighbouring Gentlemen and Pariſhes: It would greatly tend to ſuppreſs Idleneſs, Drunkenneſs, Sloth and Luxury, and promote Induſtry, Parſimony, Honeſty and Virtue in the Nation. I ſay, it would greatly tend to produce theſe good Effects; for I'm not ſo ſanguine as to think it would actually of itſelf produce them all; other Regulations would be neceſſary to be joyned with it, in order to bring about the Reformation, and put an effectual Stop to *thoſe audacious Crimes of Robbery and Violence*, taken Notice of by his Majeſty in his gracious Speech from the Throne, which have extended themſelves from the Metropolis to the diſtant Parts of the Kingdom. Particularly, ſuch a Number of Public Houſes ought not to be allowed. Many of theſe live upon the Vices of the People. And ſurely it muſt be wrong Policy to encourage or Licence thoſe Profeſſions, that eat out, as one may ſay, the Bowels of their Mother Country. *Demades*, a famous Orator of *Athens*, having convicted

convicted a certain Undertaker of Funerals, of having wished for great Profit by his Trade, got him condemned for it: Because such Profit, it was said, could not arise, but by the Death of many of his Fellow-Citizens. And can the Profits of many of our Public-Houses arise any other way, but from the Consumption, Beggary, and Destruction of many of the People? When there is a Public-House not only upon every Part of the Road, but almost in every Corner of the Country; what a Temptation is it to many People to go in and spend their Time and Money, especially when Baits of various Kinds are thrown out, and all Manner of Diversions and Allurements contrived to draw in Customers? The Masters of these Houses, from the Time they first take up the Business, think of nothing but living an idle luxurious Life: Whatever Trade or Occupation they had been brought up to, 'tis all soon dropped and forgot. So that not only the Damage to the Tipplers themselves, in the Expence of Money, Loss of Time, Loss of Health and Labour, is to be charged to this Source of Evil; but likewise the Damage the Public sustains by losing the Labour of so many Gentlemen Landlords, as well as of their tippling Guests: Whose Number (I mean of the former, the latter being numberless) throughout the Kingdom would, upon a Calculation, appear surprizingly great. Indeed Public-Houses abound so excessively in all Parts, that, to a Sranger, the whole Nation must appear like a great Thoroughfare, and as if it depended

in a great Meaſure on ſome Foreigners for its Support; it being otherwiſe almoſt inconceivable how ſuch a Number of Houſes of Entertainment, or the Nation itſelf on their Account, ſhould be able to ſubſiſt. Public-Houſes were deſigned only to be Places of Reception and Entertainment for Travellers, Sojourners and Strangers, and none ſhould be allowed, but in ſuch Numbers and Places, as might be ſufficient to anſwer this End. The Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter* have lately given a good Example, by ſuppreſſing a great Number of petty diſorderly Public-Houſes, and agreeing to Licence none, but ſuch as ſhall be recommended by ſome of the principal Inhabitants in the ſeveral Pariſhes. And the Example ought to be followed throughout the Kingdom, and no Licence ſhould be granted to any Perſon to keep a Public-Houſe, but upon a Certificate from the Miniſter and Pariſh-Officers, of the Uſefulneſs of ſuch Houſe, and of the proper Qualifications of the Perſon going to keep it. And tho' the Government might find ſome Deficiency upon one Branch of the Revenue, by ſuch a Reduction of Public-Houſes, it would more than find an Equivalent in the Health, Wealth, Sobriety, Trade and Proſperity of the People.

Drunkenneſs is, and has been for ſome Time at an amazing Height in this Nation, eſpecially among the common People. This monſtrous Enormity is fraught with ſo many and ſo great Evils of almoſt every Kind, that tho' ſome of its baneful

baneful Effects have been before took Notice of, one can hardly, on this Occaſion of touching again upon the Subject, quit it without endeavouring to ſet ſome further Mark upon ſo odious and deſtructive a Vice.

Si natura negat, facit indignatio Verſum.
JUVENAL.

Drunkenneſs, like the Infection of a peſtilential Diſeaſe, rages moſt and ſpreads its Contagion faſteſt and fartheſt among the Flower of the People; among the moſt healthy, active, ſtrong, and vigorous; among the moſt uſeful Subjects of the Kingdom, and moſt valuable Members of the Community. It every where carries with it Idleneſs and Sloth; Debauchery and Corruption; Sickneſs and Infirmity; Poverty and Want; it drowns Reaſon, makes Men daring and deſperate, ready to engage in any wicked Enterprize, to rob and murder, for a Supply of their Neceſſities and Vices. Some Stop therefore, if poſſible, ſhould be put to this reigning epidemical Evil of Drunkenneſs. And one way to do it, is to reduce the Number of *Publicans*; and take Care, that thoſe who ſhall be continued, obſerve good Order, and ſuffer no Tipplers in their Houſes after a certain Hour; and no Servants, Day-Labourers, *&c.* at any Hour, unleſs upon ſome reaſonable Occaſion.

In ſhort, Idleneſs, Drinking, Gaming, Whoring, whatever brings Men to Diſtreſs and Want ſhould

ſhould, if poſſible, be removed and ſuppreſſed. For when Men are in great Want, Nature will force them to look out for a Supply. But no honeſt legal Way of Supply occuring to People reduced by ſuch Courſes, Thieving and Robbing are too commonly reſolved upon, as a neceſſary Evil, and as the laſt Reſource: Are too commonly reſolved upon by the Strong, and Bold, and Couragious; while the Infirm and Puſillanimous perhaps are content to throw themſelves on their Pariſh for a mean and wretched Subſiſtence. To tell a Man in extreme Want, and in no Way of getting a Livelihood, not to rob or ſteal, is almoſt the ſame Thing, as to tell him, not to eat or drink. Many Perſons, that ſet out in the World with very honeſt Principles, by bringing themſelves into diſtreſsful Circumſtances through their Vices and Extravagances, have been tempted to tranſgreſs the Bounds of Juſtice, and have proceeded to defraud and ſteal, nay to commit Robbery and Murder, Crimes they once abhored the very Thoughts of.

BRITISH 6 AU 85 MUSEUM

Yours, &c.

Erneſettle, near Plymouth,
Jan. 2, 1752.